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[A BREAK TO HARMONY.]

## ELGIVA; OR, THE GIPSY'S CURSE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Snapt Link," "Evelyn's Plot," "Sybil's Inheritance," &c., &c.

### CHAPTER XXV.

That curse shall be forgiveness. Have I not—  
Hear me, my mother earth! behold it, Heaven!—  
Have I not had to wrestle with my lot?  
Have I not suffered things to be forgiven?  
Have I not had my brain seared, my heart riven,  
Hopes sapped, name blighted, life's life led away?

"ELGIVA, what does this mean?" said the count, sternly, as he gazed on his daughter's flushed and excited face. "Have you so soon forgotten the facts I have so often impressed upon you? How dare you countenance this young man in his presumption, or permit him to enter your private apartments in this indecorous manner?"

Juan, or, as he may now be called, Count Ludovic of Arnheim and Chetwode, would have hastily replied to the imperious though faltering taunt of the old man, but Elgiva interposed.

"Father," she said, her sweet tones sounding strangely soft and musical after the harsh, hoarse accents of the agitated count, "father, surely you are still in ignorance of the blessed tidings which I have but now learnt. You cannot know that this gentleman is your and my long-lost relative, the son of Count Oscar, who was stolen in his infancy. Thank Heaven for clearing away that dreadful mystery," she resumed, clasping her hands. "Dearest father, all will be well now that the heritage which attracted interested and unworthy suitors is taken from me. Oh, I am so free, so happy!" she exclaimed, with a more joyous, girlish laugh than the old count had heard from her lips for many a long month.

He stood motionless in sullen doubtfulness.

"Young gentleman," he said, hesitatingly, "I do not affect to deny that I have heard from your—what

am I to call him?—guardian that you are about to set up some such claim as my daughter mentions. But it is scarcely likely that I shall so easily admit it as she seems to do, or make it a ground of imagining that she is possibly—mind you, I say possibly—about to be deprived of a splendid heritage, a dignity of which she is so truly worthy; and," he added, more loftily, "it is a very unfavourable commencement of the negotiations that may ensue to actually steal like a thief into the private apartments of Lady Elgiva, in order to bargain as it were for her hand as a bribe for giving credence to your tale."

Juan had listened impatiently to this harangue, which nothing but Elgiva's imploring looks could have induced him to tolerate to its end. But no sooner did the lips of the old noble close than he broke forth passionately.

"Kinsman," he exclaimed, "you are unjust to attribute such dishonour to one who is as far from degradation and falsehood as any noble of our race. This fair, peerless girl can vouch for the long-cherished love, or I would rather call it worship, that I have felt for her in despair and obscurity. Heaven knows that I would not willingly take one gem from the coronet that was destined for her. I would not even assert my right could it detract from her happiness or honour. But it does not. She loves me—yes, even as an humble, unknown adventurer I won a heart for which princes might well strive, and it is the chief joy of my heart in this wonderful discovery of my birth that I can win her hand and preserve to her the same wealth and station that she now enjoys. Kinsman of my father, do not ruin the joy and peace that might be ours. Do not force me to go back long years and rake up the old, miserable memories of sin and sorrow that have been poured into my ears with sickening, overwhelming force. You know, you feel that I am the lost Ludovic. For my dead father's sake shield his name and your own from the world's scandal. It killed him. Do not let his memory—"

Juan stopped hastily. His words had indeed worked a terrible and startling effect on their hearer.

Count Arnheim's face was ashen white, his eyes

blazed like the red coal amidst the white powder that surrounds dying embers, and his limbs trembled so violently that Elgiva hastily drew a chair towards him and gently impelled him to its support.

"Father, dearest father, what ails you? It is only his eagerness to prevail that makes him speak thus," she said, soothingly. "Only say what will give us all such blessing; only tell us that you believe—or that when you are conscious of his truth you will welcome him as a long-lost kinsman, as—"

"A son," interrupted the young man, eagerly, "a dutiful, loving son. Oh, if you remember your own youthful days, the love you bore to your bride, the sorrow at the loss of your wife, then feel what Elgiva and I must suffer by a very unaccountable caprice on your part. Do not fear any revival of past memories or claims. Let all be as it would have been if my dear father had been spared till now and I were about to step into his vacant place. Why hesitate, why fear, my honoured kinsman?" he continued, anxiously, as the same strange agitation convulsed the count which he had before displayed.

"Boy, boy, be silent. Why do you always speak of him—your father? You do not, you cannot know what you do. You play recklessly with sharp tools in recalling his name."

Juan stared in amazement.

"What do you mean?" he said. "Why should I not speak of him to whom I owe reverence even though he is gone, whose fate I so mourn—ay, and would, were it possible, avenge?"

"Boy, boy, you are mad to speak thus. You do not know all. He was but punished for his sins. He did but endure the agony that he had before inflicted in his fatal career," exclaimed the old count, angrily. "Why is he ever to be cast up in my very teeth, searing my very eyes with his withering curse?"

Juan was awe-stricken by the vehement reproach.

"Count," he said, instinctively using the title that the old man had so long borne, "you are unjust. It is no desire of mine to distress or injure you in the very slightest degree; but I am at a loss to comprehend your passion, your reproaches, unless there is

something all unknown and foreign to me in your knowledge of the past."

"No, no, no," ejaculated the old man, vehemently. "Not so, boy, not so. I am but a weak and heart-broken old man. I can remember so much, and, alas, alas! can hope for so little. My very child rebels against me; my name and wealth are usurped by a stranger. What is to be the end? How can I endure life in such peril? No, no," he added, abruptly, "it must not be. I will be firm. Elgiva, you are the affianced bride of Prince Charles, and you shall be his wife."

"Never!" thundered the young man. "Never, so long as I have a voice to protest or an arm to uplift against such base sacrilege. Kinsman of my father, listen to my unflinching resolve. If you are in earnest in your cold, selfish resolve, if you dare to condemn the child who deserves all love and kindness at your hands and the kinsman who is willing to show such forbearance for the injuries of the past to such crushing, needless misery, then you yourself may look for the just consequences of such iniquity. I will push my just claims, I will exact all the arrears that are due to me in such an event, and plunge you into a distress that you can little anticipate as a retribution for your folly. It will remain then to be seen whether Prince Charles can shelter you from my revenge or whether your child will submit to be sacrificed for the mad caprice of a senseless ambition. My Elgiva," he added as the girl's hand was placed before his quivering lips, "do not stop, do not blame me for the sins of others. I must speak—I will—for there is the happiness of more than one at stake, and it is no time to submit to the wild, senseless obstinacy of those who will have gone to their account long ere we shall have run our earthly career. Count of Arnheim, consider well ere you decide, for I have too much of the spirit of our race in my veins to be trifled with in the haughty manner which you have adopted towards those who have most claim on your justice and your love."

There was a decision, a manly pride in his tone that rarely can be seen in one so young and so untutored, and perhaps it was one of the best and surest indications of the blood that flowed in his veins that he thus resented the injustice.

The count was either awe-stricken by the young man's vehemence or his own conscience had a stab in it which gave additional force to the dagger thus pointed by his adversary.

"You talk wildly," he said. "Remember, young man, it is not for me to yield blindly to the claim you make. There have been plenty of impostors in the world from Perkin Warbeck till our own day. It would be asking too much for you to expect not only your boasted rights but the hand of my only child and heiress without inquiry or proof. Leave us, I say, till I can think and decide. My daughter is already betrothed to a nobleman of far nobler descent than you or I ever can boast, even granting your claim is just, and it would be dangerous if not impossible for me to withdraw the consent I have already given. No," he added as if fortifying himself by the recapitulation of the facts, "no; I can see and feel that I have no alternative. Elgiva, you must fulfil your bond, and this young pretender can do his worst at his leisure when your destiny is secured."

"Father, it is secured," she replied, calmly. "Every remaining scruple is satisfied now that my choice is so abundantly justified. Not," she said, gently, "that I doubted before. I knew too well the value of the preserver of my life to think myself lowered by the love I had promised. But now you have no pretext for refusal. He offers all, sacrifices all for your sake, and you have but to give him your poor child without a dowry—ay, actually receiving one from his bounty. Dear, dear father, it is but madness, worse than madness, to reject such happiness for us all. There can be no risk from that proud, overbearing, selfish man that we will not bear and vanquish. Juan, you will laugh at his idle resentment and baffle his plans. Shall it not be so, dear cousin?"

Juan would have undertaken to vanquish an empire at the bidding of that loved voice. No wonder if he fervently entered into such easy bonds as those stipulated, and joined in Elgiva's enthusiastic promises and cheering resolution.

"She is right. It is but craven fear, contemptible submission to a false, treacherous, mercenary assassin," he resumed, eagerly. "I boldly aver that he nearly took my life. Kinsman, is such a reckless, unprincipled man to be trusted with your child when I, her very slave, implore her at your hands? It is impossible, worse than impossible, that you could refuse our prayer."

Count Arnheim looked on the youthful and well-matched pair before him. His heart responded to the silent argument of their love and beauty, and there was that in his conscience which told him more plainly than words the truth of Ludovic of Arnheim's claims.

Yes, a terrible, scarcely acknowledged secret slumbered in the very recesses of his soul, a remaining sense of justice warned him of the retribution that might still await him if he persisted in a virtual and tacit crime.

"It is all too sudden, too unsettled, for any promises to be made," he replied. "All I can say is that if it be really well and fully proved to my satisfaction that you are the unfortunate and long-lost heir of Count Oscar, then it may certainly be a duty for me to compensate you in a measure for your past suffering and self-denial, and, if it be possible to break the bond which already binds Elgiva to Prince Charles, I may very likely feel it a pleasant duty to give her to you, young man, along with the other possessions of our ancestors. I neither will nor can promise more," he added, hurriedly, as the sound of steps approached. "And if you have a spark of kindness or wisdom in your soul you will not destroy all by pushing to desperation the unfortunate victim in your power."

The intruder, whoever he might be, was now close at hand, and in another moment Harold was in the room, with that usual air of unfinching and unyielding domination that so few could readily withstand.

"Well," he said, with a sharp glance at Elgiva's agitated countenance, "so you have made your way here, young man, have you, and explained your real identity to her whom it most concerns? Well, well, she will soon be safe, and will perhaps be all the happier and more submissive for losing her inheritance. It's a bad thing for a lass to have in possession. It engenders presumption—eh, lady?" he added, turning to Elgiva, with a smile that had a touch of smug insolence in its curling pride.

But the girl's quiet dignity, her full cup of happiness, the bright prospects opening before her, blunted in a measure the sting of the implied taunt, and she answered, calmly:

"It is right that justice should be done, and I, for one, will not shrink from or regret the ordeal."

There was an instinct in the girl's heart that made her conceal the overflowing feelings of her soul in the presence of that bold man. Not a word or look betrayed the deep interest she felt in the now claimant for the honours of her race, and she walked to her father's side and placed her arm affectionately round his neck as if to guard him from every evil and express her own intention to support and stand by him in every adversity and change.

So Harold seemed to accept it, and he turned with a sort of grim satisfaction to the half-perplexed and impatient Juan.

"It is enough for one day, young man. All is done that is possible in the time; but rest assured that all is true and certain as the sun in yonder heavens, and the gipsy Juan is the lawful heir of the broad lands of Osetwode and Arnheim. Come, you had better leave these noble usurpers to their reflections. It may be that they will find it safer and better to yield without struggle to the claims you set forth. Adieu, count! Adieu, lady!" he added, with a careless nod, and, drawing Juan's arm within his, he impelled him from the room with the magic power he seemed to wield over those within its influence, and in a moment the door closed on the father and daughter and their desolate, blighted prospects of rank and wealth.

#### CHAPTER XXVI.

The pale moon that through the casement high  
Surreys the sleepless nurse, stamps the hour  
Of utter silence; it is fearful then  
To bare the mind in deadly solitude,  
To wind the mighty secrets of the past,  
And turn the key of time.

"LENA, LENA," sounded faintly from a couch which was assuredly luxurious enough to give ease and comfort to aught but a mind diseased, and was but one of the costly and rare articles lavished on the secret chamber at Osetwode Castle, whose mysterious occupant was under the especial charge of Marian Oliver.

The lovely invalid had somewhat changed since the day after that memorable ball when her guardian had visited her in the early morning watch. Perhaps the strength had waned a little, for the outward signs of health were less promising than on that occasion, and the cheek had lost some of the hectic bloom that had more fever than vigour in its warmth.

But the startled anxiety in the eyes, and the wild, troubled air that had characterized her whole aspect were far less obvious, and the very languor which pervaded the whole figure and movements betokened a mind more at rest than was the case when she pleaded with Marian for liberty and for aid.

"LENA," came again, softly but urgently, on the atmosphere of the quiet apartment, and in another moment the slight figure of the young gipsy appeared from a sort of inner closet that seemed intended or used for a sort of dressing or withdrawing recess, since room it could scarcely be entitled.

Lena was not now in the picturesque costume of

her tribe, but habited rather in the Spanish style that gave scarcely less romance to her young and expressive features. The black dress, the large lace mantilla that was wrapped gracefully over the small head and hung over the drooping shoulders, accorded well with the somewhat saddened expression that had shadowed the buoyant gaiety once natural to the mountain and woodland child; but it gave an air of refinement which had perhaps been wanting then.

As she advanced into the larger chamber the volume in her hand proved that she had been occupied rather in studies than in rest or slumber during her interval of attendance on her exacting charge.

A smile illumined the pale face of the unhappy Tessa as she saw Lena approach.

"Ah, you are there," she said. "I am troublesome, I know, but you seem to have been like a very spirit of love since you came hither, and I fret and chafe in your absence. Will you sing to me, child? It will soothe me even more than your gentle voice in reading. Sing one of your strange, soft, dreamy songs, child."

The girl looked round for a guitar that stood in one corner of the room, and, casting the scarlet ribbon that hung from it round her throat, she touched the strings lightly, as if to test their tone, and, sitting down on a low ottoman by the couch on which Tessa reclined, she began to sing.

It was an old, low, romantic ballad, which the girl had picked up, it might be, in the wanderings of the tribe, and her rich, sympathetic, though not highly trained voice was well fitted, as it seemed, to invest it with an exquisite charm.

Tessa's eyes dried as the ballad went on, and her whole features were an air of soft repose, which, alas! was but passing and transitory in her troubled mind.

When Lena ceased she suddenly opened the heavy lids, and looked with a grateful fondness on the young girl who had thus cast a magic spell over her restless spirit.

"Thank, thank," she said. "That is sweet, yes, very sweet and soothing. But now you shall put away that foreign instrument that reminds me too much of other and happy days, and sit down here—close—and speak to me, listen to me, while I am in the mood, Lena."

The girl obeyed, with the gliding silence that seems to become natural to one who, like the young Lena, has long been an inhabitant of a sick chamber. And as she placed herself once more at the feet of her charge it seemed rather with the indulgent yielding to the caprices of a child or a fever patient than the deliberate compliance with a rational and wanted request.

"What would you, dear lady? I have so little to say that can interest you," she observed, at length, as Tessa seemed to wait for her to begin.

"Little! Child, how little you understand. Have you not the experience of a woman's young heart?" returned the woman, eagerly. "Can you not tell me of all you have seen and felt and suffered in your wanderings? I know that you have been in many climes, and heard of and seen the manners and ways of many lands. Child, you must have met your fate in the progress. One like you can never have escaped such rapture—such agony. Tell me, is it not so?"

"If you mean that I have loved," said Lena, coldly, "you are wrong. I never knew the passion."

"Are you sure? Can it be?" said the woman, in sharper, doubting tones. "Is there no one you love?—no one for whom you would give up life and all that you possess of peace and happiness beside?"

"I did not say that," replied the girl, smiling good-humouredly, though a deep flush mantled her face. "There are those I do love well enough for that—but not in the sense I understood you to mean," she added, softly.

"Ah, surely it cannot be; surely no one like you can thus feel unless for a lover—a husband. And I cannot but think that it is so with you, fair girl. Would you tell me that no one ever felt the charm of your magic smile, your sweet look, your voice, your eyes that would eclipse so many of far more dazzling beauty? Did you never listen to words of love and prayers for its return?"

Lena's face crimsoned scarlet.

She remembered too well the imperious advances of Prince Charles, the half-threats, the prayers, the proud resolve that she should eventually listen to his strange, overbearing love, and, in soft and gentle and unselfish contrast, the generous devotion of Bertie, the gipsy lover, who, never dreaming of return save by a grateful smile or word of approval, would yet have laid down his very life in her service; and she knew that in truth and earnestness she could not reply to that strange questioning save by a confession that such a declaration was no stranger to her ear, and that she had indeed not failed to spread the romantic charm around her which Tessa deemed her so fitted to inspire.



"What matters it?" she answered, evasively. "I have told you the truth as to myself. I have nothing to do with others, nor would I willingly betray the secrets which ought to be inviolable to an honourable mind."

Tessa smiled bitterly.

"Honour!" she exclaimed, "honour! Is there such a thing in human nature?—or, rather, in man's nature? I do not believe it. I have never known it. And it is for that, poor child, that I would warn you against such dangers and perils. Lena, I was told that your seclusion here was for your good as well as mine. I was told that you were in danger. Is it so?"

The girl shivered slightly at the ominous words, spoken as they were with the wild, unnatural energy that seemed to actually feed on the waste of the thin, shadowy frame.

"I suppose there is ever danger in mystery," she said, "and there are strange and gloomy agencies around me and those I love best which are far more awful than the most real and terrible dangers. But I am not aware that I have ever done ought to provoke enmity, or to be even worth the attempt to injure an obscure and helpless girl. But I fear far more for others, from whom I have been torn and of whose fate I am ignorant. If they were safe I should care little for myself."

"Womanlike," murmured Tessa. "And is it a lover then for whom you are thus anxious?"

"No," returned the girl, firmly, "no lover, nor one whom I would ever wish to be so if he would. But it is one I love as dearly and devotedly as my own brother. I would do all—dare all to serve him, if I were but once certain of his real good, or of the objects of those who seem to take such charge of him."

Tessa shivered in her turn as she whispered in the girl's ears, with as low a tone and as anxious a glance around as if there were eavesdroppers in every corner—ears in every mute object near them:

"Child, child, you must not even think of such fearful secrets! You do not know—you cannot imagine the powers that work your own and others' destiny. I tell you every word is known—even every thought seems to be carried to that dread tribunal. No one is safe; no one can ever escape their terrible punishment, their mysterious will. Even the caves of the earth, or the strong fastnesses of the mountain, the crowded thoroughfare, the lone convent would not hide the fugitive who had been marked out as a victim of that dread power."

Lena gazed anxiously at the woman, with a growing sense of her delirious insanity.

"Of whom do you speak then?" she said, gently—"of the Almighty Ruler of this earth, whom, even in the solitude and dreariness of my woodland life, I learned to worship in His works."

"No, no, no!" replied the woman, with a thrilling laugh. "Poor, simple child! As if such holy, sacred ideas ever could enter into the brain of those demonic natures! No, the Being of whom you speak is good and merciful—but then, then," she resumed, wildly, in the same awed tone as before, "why does He permit such horrors? Why does He not crush such usurpers from His earth? Lena, Lena, if I could but believe—if I could but be assured that there is a good and gracious Creator ruling over this earth it would perhaps still the fire of this poor brain of mine!"

She put up her hand to her hot brow as she spoke.

"And have you suffered so much? Do you fear this same mysterious power?" asked Lena, anxiously.

She could scarcely believe the wild, wandering words, yet they tallied somewhat with the events that had transpired and the hints that she had herself received.

Tessa did not reply for a moment.

Then she seemed to collect at once her courage and her energies, and she suddenly raised her head from the pillow in which she had concealed her face.

"I have," she said. "I have suffered till I am the wreck you see now, and it may be that there is yet more for me to endure in this world ere I am taken from its evils and sins. Lena, you wondered but now that I spoke to you—questioned you of love. Had you known all you would scarcely have been surprised at the anxious care I felt that you, young and gentle and fair, should be spared what I have gone through for the sake of that one mighty passion. Yes, it was because I was beloved, and loved again—because I endured tortures of jealousy and desertion—that I was snatched from every bond and interest in life; and had it not been for her who brought you hither I should perhaps have been condemned to yet more severe punishments. But she saved me—saved me, I believe, at her own cost, her own hurt, and for long years I have been concealed from every eye but hers till she brought you hither. It was little wonder, was it, that when she told me you also were in danger, in grief and sorrow, that I believed the same danger, the same rapture, the same weal was

acted again in your case? Even now I cannot comprehend what is the motive for concealing you—why you are to be kept in durance, unless there has been some violation of the law committed."

Lena listened with eager attention.

She could, perhaps, guess something of the dim and misty truth when she recalled the singular words and manner of Prince Charles, the disappearance of Juan, the warnings of Marian Oliver, and the equally remarkable separation from Amiea that had succeeded the illness of her cousin.

And Tessa declared that all was from the same cause, the same one offence of heart, the same mysterious enmity that waged war with the purest, tenderest, and most unselfish of human passions.

"Tell me," she resumed, at last, "what was your fault, Tessa? Nay," she added as the woman's brow contracted with half-scorful suffering, "I do not ask from idle curiosity. I but would fain know whether I myself can have ever erred, or, still more, whether those dearest to me can have been guilty of offences which you declare are so severely punished. Lady, if you have indeed suffered as you tell me, if your years have been spent in the solitude and misery of this prison-house—at least save others from the same fate, give yourself the consolation of delivering the innocent from such unnatural punishment!"

Lena's look and gesture were perhaps even more touchingly significant than her words.

Tessa was certainly moved by the earnest entreaty, and yet the old terror displayed itself in her tender tremulous eyes and manner.

"Child, I dare not—I must not," she whispered.

"Must not! dare not! dare not! a good and blessed deed!" returned the girl, with a glance of unmistakable sorrow. "Tessa, you are ill, suffering, your life is as you tell me a mere toil and misery to you. And yet in past days, in your youth and your beauty, there must have been joy and love in your heart. Have you forgotten all you felt then? Have you no sympathy for those who are in the very bloom and freshness and vigour of such hopes and energies? And, again, if you believe in the Being of whom you spoke but now, if you desire peace and acceptance and faith in your last hour, oh, strive to have some good and gracious memories, some truly great, some redeeming remembrance to recall in that awful hour. A few months or years of life to be put in competition with such blessings; and when you know and feel that you can exert for good, for salvation, the knowledge you have so bitterly acquired, can you not cast the guilty terror to the very winds and rest on the good and noble hopes such remembrances would bring?"

Tessa had covered her face as the girl proceeded, yet Lena fancied there were marks of relenting in the shudder of the limbs, the convulsive pressure of the hands. And her hopes rose high and clear as she went on:

"Tessa—dear, good, injured Tessa—I have been told that strange passwords, strange signs exist in the mysterious band which, as I presume, presides over our fate, and perhaps mine and his and hers. Nay do not shrink and gaze round," she said, half scornfully. "I have been exposed alone and unprotected to the power of these bad men, but I trust in Heaven and my innocence, and would defy all for the sake of those I love best on earth. Tessa, if you hope for peace and happiness in life or death, confide in me the miserable secret that may tend to save lives whose value you can little appreciate."

Tessa had hidden her face in her cushions, and it might have been thought that she scarcely heeded the girl's passionate words.

But as Lena finished she raised her face with a flash of half-indignant, half-resolute pride in her lovely though wasted features.

"It shall be so," she said. "I will trust you, poor, innocent child, trust you with the secret of my life; yes, both for the past and the present. I may be wrong," she added, raising her eyes to Heaven with a look that had more calmness and resignation in it than Lena had yet seen. "I may be betraying trust and polluting innocence by the tale. But my motives are right and true, and if I reveal what has been hidden for so many years it is rather for others' safety than any benefit of mine," she continued, after a pause. "Child, come nearer, nearer; listen to my tale as you would to revelation on which life and home and happiness hang, and may Heaven so do to you and yours as you preserve the trust that you are now receiving."

"Amen," said the girl, solemnly.

For some moments there was silence in the chamber.

"Search—search well," whispered Tessa, and Lena humoured what appeared a causeless fancy, and inspected each corner and nook of that and the small adjoining room that served her as her own sleeping and retiring apartment.

"All is safe," she said. "It is impossible that any

one can linger near us. Not one chink or crevice is left in which the faintest sound could enter. Quick, dear Tessa, for time flies, and it is well nigh impossible to count on a day as it passes for another chance."

The girl placed herself once again on the low ottoman at Tessa's feet, and leaned her head close on her pillow so as to catch each syllable as it came from the white and parched lips.

Yet with all those precautions the poor, nerveless sufferer's very teeth chattered and her voice trembled as she proceeded with her brief tale.

"Lena," she said, "I was very young at the time of which I am speaking. Some years less than yours had passed over my head, and it may be that I could boast even greater beauty than your fair self, when I met my fate. And, mark you, I was then to all appearance an obscure and low-born Zingara girl with no high birth, no powerful friends to assert my rights. But it was not so," she added, proudly, "my blood was as ancient—ay, perhaps more so than that of the author of my destruction, and the power that watched over me had far greater might, far more terrible omniscience than the most powerful noble which Germany or Spain or England could boast."

"I suppose he did not believe it. I suppose he considered me but lawful and safe prey. But, in any case, I believed in him as many a foolish girl has done, and many will do again. His handsome face, his graceful mien and fluent tongue, that uttered tones so different to the ruder accents around me, were sufficient to win my heart. Yes, I believed him, and would have died to gratify his slightest wish—far more, I was willing to give him the heart and hand and life which he considered his greatest happiness. Lena, to your pure ears I can hardly tell the rest. Only it is enough to say that a babe was born, and that those who knew all swore a deep revenge on the author of my disgrace."

"Lena, listen. It was not alone those who had kindred with me, and watched over me as a jealous and loving guardian should, who thus swore the terrible oath, it was a more wide-spread and mighty power that watches over the deeds and guards the honour and insists on the obedience of all who are within its shadow and have sworn its terrible oath of allegiance. He who had the chief share in my misery was one of this wide-spread band. As he violated his oath, and disgraced his class by such a deed, he was from that moment selected for destruction, and no human power could have availed to save him."

"Then it is for good, for guardianship of morals—not for wickedness—that they are thus bound?" said Lena, eagerly.

"Poor child—poor, innocent child! Alas! no. It is rather for their own wicked caprice, for the tyranny that will control every word, every action of their victims," was the reply. "I tell you that should the slightest violation of the awful, wicked oath that they are forced to take incur the punishment the terrible arm of that wide-spread engine will embrace the offender in its fatal clasp. And as he is drawn in its grasp no human eye will see him more—no human voice ever fall on his ears—save if the very rocks should open, or a miracle of mercy be exercised on his behalf."

"And was this so in the case of your—lover?" whispered Lena, in awe-struck tones.

"It was worse," said the woman, hoarsely. "We were driven to desperation—ay, perhaps to crime—and then, and then they say he died, either by his own or other's hands. And I, as I have told you, was but reclaimed from a horrible living death by the noble devotion of one who loved me well. For my sake she took that fearful oath, and condemned herself to a life-long bondage, and for me she has sinned and suffered, rarely without being condemned when such a motive wrought the sin. Child, child, be warned by such horrors. Keep from the frightful passions which work misery where this awful engine is concerned in its object. And do not, by mistaken zeal, bind yourself like a poor fly to the wheel over which you have no more power than the veriest breeze that scarcely stirs a leaf by its gentle whisper."

"I will do my duty—ay, at whatever cost," said the girl, firmly. "Tessa, it is useless for you to urge me to that which is impossible for me to perform. My very soul is given to the one great task of saving those who you have shown me need even more than I believed my aid. And if you really would do good, if you desire to preserve them or me from danger and misery, you will rather tell me some means of escape—some such secrets as will deliver others from what you have suffered—than attempt to dissuade me from my task. Surely you can do this," she continued. "Yes, I will swear never to betray you if you will but impart to me any knowledge you possess. I will die rather than even mention the very name of her whom I will ever bless as my best preserver. Only give me some power to

avert this calamity, some help in the danger and sorrow you predict."

Tessa hesitated for a few minutes as if awaiting the result of a terrible war between good and evil spirits, the unselfish pity and the terror she endured.

Then as she gazed on Lena's noble, expressive features her resolve seemed taken.

"It shall be so," she said. "And perhaps it may be accepted as some atonement for what I have sinned in past days—some offering for him who has long since slept with his fathers. Lena," she exclaimed, suddenly, "do you believe in that? Do you think that any atonement can be made for the sins of those who have gone before?"

"It may be, it is a sweet and consoling faith," returned the girl, "but, Tessa, in any case we know there is One who sees and knows our poor endeavours to atone for the past, and the temptations that we suffer. For the sake of him you loved I adjure you to do this generous and acceptable deed, to help me for those who I can now see are in deadly and almost fatal peril."

"Then I will," she whispered, "I will. Listen."

Then for some moments there was a low and hissing sound, that scarcely amounted to words, in the chamber; and Lena's head was well nigh resting on the lips that barely opened to emit the life-bringing communication.

She had just moved slightly as Tessa paused in the long narrative, and her hand was still tightly clasped in the invalid's, when there was a slight noise, a movement of the oak panelling in the wall.

The next instant Harold Farino stood within the apartment.

(To be continued.)

## SCIENCE.

**LACQUERING BRASSWORK.**—First see that there is no ironwork about the piece of brass to be cleaned; dip in strong aquafortis, dry it off with hot water and sawdust, then take and burnish the high parts with ox-gall or beer, by rubbing it with the burnisher till it becomes quite bright, dry it with fine tissue paper. The lacquering is done by giving it a coat over with pale lacquer with a fine camel's-hair brush when cold; then heat over a Bunsen burner till you can just touch it with the back of your hand, brush it over again with the lacquer, and if not high enough in colour heat and brush it over to required height.

**THE COLOUR OF FISHES.**—M. Georges Pouchet has written a paper on the mechanism of the changes of colour in fishes and crustacea. In it the author refers to the fact that fishes often change in colour according to the colour of the objects by which they are surrounded; but he explains that this does not take place when the fish is deprived of the nerves that preside over the peculiar corpuscles to which the colour is due. The change does not take place in blind turbot; and in the seeing turbot, if the nerves are divided which communicate between the eye and the skin, the change does not occur. If the fifth nerve is divided the change takes place all over the body except the part to which that nerve is distributed. These experiments, according to M. Pouchet, show that the change of colour is dependent upon impressions received by the nervous system through the organs of vision.

**CONDENSING LIQUID STEEL.**—At the Austrian Steel Works of Neuburg, Styria, Chevalier Stummer has carried out a large series of experiments in order to weld the interior particles of cast steel to each other as strongly as possible, and to prevent honey-combing. The principal result of the experiments is that it is quite possible, by exposing the semi-fluid metal to great pressure, to unite all the pores within a very limited space in the centre of the steel block. This fact is of importance in the manufacture of heavy steel ordnance. A pressure of from six to nine tons on the square inch is sufficient to compress a red-hot steel ingot before its solidification, and give it an even structure throughout the whole mass, whereas the impact of even a 50-ton Nasmyth is principally spent on the outer part of the block. Only very heavy hammers or rams will effectually overcome the vis inertia which a very heavy casting opposes to them.

**BLEACHING WAX.**—Wax is freed from its impurities and bleached by melting it with hot water or steam in a tinned copper or wooden vessel, letting it settle, running off clear supernatant oily-looking liquid into an oblong trough with a line of holes in its bottom, so as to distribute it upon horizontal wooden cylinders made to revolve half immersed in cold water, and then exposing the thin ribbons or films thus obtained to the bleaching action of air, light, and moisture. For this purpose the ribbons are laid upon long webs of canvas stretched horizontally between standards, two feet above the surface of a

sheltered field, having a free exposure to the sun-beams. Here they are frequently turned over and covered by nets to prevent their being blown away by winds, and watered from time to time. Whenever the colour of the wax seems stationary it is collected, remelted, and thrown again into ribbons upon the net cylinder in order to present new surfaces to the bleaching operation. If the weather proves favourable the wax eventually loses its yellow tint. Neither chlorine, nor even the chlorides of lime and alkalies, can be employed with advantage to bleach wax, because they render it brittle and impair its burning qualities.

**BRETHERTON SUGAR IN CALIFORNIA.**—The Sacramento Beet Sugar Company have expended in buildings, machinery, and 540 acres of choice land, 225,000 dollars. They have rented other lands, and have sown with beet this season 1,100 acres, from which they hope to get an average of 10 tons of beet per acre. The methods of culture can be improved in California; deep ploughing is as yet hardly understood, and thus the real wealth and producing power of the soil are not utilized, but it is stated that the beet here yields a larger per-centage of sugar than in Europe, which, considering the favourable climate and rich soil, is not surprising. The field work and general culture are done by Chinese. The beets are sown by a machine in rows; are thinned, weeded, and dug by hand. The Chinese, who work in gangs, receive 5 dollars per week; for this they feed themselves, the company paying a cook for every thirty men; they furnish also bedding and cooking utensils. The 1,100 acres planted will employ the factory about eight months, and it is hoped to turn out 10,000 barrels of sugar this year. Only the whitest sugar is made; a ton of beet ought to yield a barrel of sugar. The refuse of the beet is given to cattle, and it is found very valuable for fattening. It is also much used for this in France.

### THE RAINFALL OF THE PRESENT YEAR.

DURING the first seven months of the present year the rainfall has been greatly in excess of the average, as the following table, which shows the results obtained at Bristol, Bishop's Sutton, and Chew Magna, proves:

	Bristol.	Bishop's	Chew
Month.	Inches.	Sutton.	Magna.
January.....	6.416	6.470	7.04
February.....	4.187	3.740	4.50
March.....	2.232	2.360	3.10
April.....	2.750	3.030	2.70
May.....	2.631	2.250	2.47
June.....	3.413	4.450	4.50
July.....	3.734	3.450	3.38
	25.348	25.750	27.69

The average amount of rainfall for the same months, as deduced from twenty years' observations by Dr. George F. Barker, is 17.171 inches. The excess of rainfall at Bristol was, therefore, 8.177 inches above the average during the seven months. The fall in every month was above the average quantity, and the total rainfall exceeded the normal amount by almost 50 percent. Mr. Barker says that there has been no other instance during the last twenty years of so large a quantity of rain having fallen in the first seven months of the year. The nearest approaches were in 1860 and 1867, when the quantity registered was 23.052 inches and 23.171 inches respectively. In the month of August this year the rainfall was below the average, being 2.178 inches.

**SEVENTEEN MILES LONG WHEAT FIELD.**—There are three wheat farms in the San Joaquin Valley with areas respectively of 36,000 acres, 23,000 acres, and 17,000 acres. On the largest of these farms the wheat crop this year is reputed to be equal to an average of 40 bushels to the acre, the yield running up in some parts of the farm to 60 bushels. The boundary on one side of this farm is about 17 miles long. At the season of ploughing ten four-horse teams attached to ten gang ploughs, each gang having four ploughs, or 40 horses with as many ploughs, were started at the same time, the teams following in close succession. Lunch or dinner was served at a midway station, and the supper at the terminus of the field, 17 miles distant from the starting-point. The teams returned on the following day. The wheat in this immense field was cut with 20 of the largest reapers, and we believe has all been thrashed and put in sacks. It would require over 40 ships of medium size to transport the wheat raised on this farm to a foreign market. Even the sacks required would make a large hole in the surplus money of most farmers. We have not the figures touching the product of the other two farms, but presume that the average is not much below that of the first. There are thousands of tons of wheat which cannot be taken out of the valley this season, and must remain over as dead

capital, or, what is nearly as undesirable, will only command advances at heavy rates of interest.

**DEATH OF THE CONSTABLE OF THE TOWER.**—Field-Marshal Sir George Pollock, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., died suddenly on the morning of the 6th ult. at Walmer. Having entered the Bengal Artillery of the East India Company's army, Sir George was actively engaged, under Lord Lake, in the first siege of Bhurtpore; and also in the Burmah war in 1824-5. His greatest achievements, however, were his forcing of the Khyber Pass after the disaster of the British in Afghanistan, the relief of Sir Robert Sale, at Jellalabad, and his advance on and the re-establishment of British prestige at Cabul. For his services he received successively the dignity of C.B. and G.C.B.; and he was one of the first Knights Grand Cross of the Star of India. He had been Envoy at the Court of Oude, and member of the Supreme Council of India. He became a Field-Marshal in 1870; and on the death of Sir John Burgoyne this year he was appointed Constable of the Tower of London. Sir G. Pollock was born 1786, and was twice married; once in 1810, to Frances, daughter of J. Barclay, Esq., and in 1832, to Henrietta, daughter of G. H. Wollaston, Esq.

### TRANSPORT OF MEAT FROM AUSTRALIA.

Mr. William Shand, of Portobello, says in a letter of the 7th ult.:

I am asked what would be the cost of transporting a cargo of fresh meat from Australia to London in a vessel prepared for the purpose with refrigerating machinery.

Taking the published statistics of the Melbourne Meat Preserving Company, I find the average price of 590 oxen to be 5*l.* 11*s.* 9*d.* each, and that of 160,752 sheep to be 7*s.* 3*d.* 4*d.* each. Presuming, for I am not specifically informed on this point, that an ox without offal will weigh 6 cwt., then we have beef in the carcass at 2*d.* per lb. Allowing 48 to 60 pounds for the weight of each sheep without offal, then we have mutton at 1*d.* to 2*d.* per lb. in Australia.

Freight from Australia to London per steamer is to be had, I am told, for 70*s.* per 40 cubic feet, allowing one-third additional space for impermeable linings and bulkheads, machinery interspace, air channels, and so taking 53.13 cubic feet for each ton weight of meat, we arrive at a freight of 4*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, or exactly one halfpenny per pound.

The outlay in fitting up 5,334 cubic feet with duplicate refrigerators, air fans, linings, and donkey engine, might cost 3,000*l.* Allowing that a steamer can make very little more than two voyages a year between London and Melbourne, and taking 25 per cent. per annum for interest, wear and tear, replacement of capital, etc., we arrive at another halfpenny per pound on the cost price of Australian meat. In fact, a halfpenny per pound on 200 tons per annum only would give more than 31 per cent. on 3,000*l.*, or would pay 25 per cent. on 3,733*l.* But we must reckon liberally in a speculation of this sort.

Then the working of the machinery has to be considered. With coals at famine prices, it is simply impossible to make any estimate of what it might cost to keep up a temperature of 30 deg. to 40 deg. Fahrenheit, during nine or ten weeks, in a ship's hold, where 100 tons of meat are stowed. No one has ever dealt with such a problem. No data exist. All I can say is that in 100 tons of meat every penny added to the price per lb. gives 933*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* on the whole. Allow, for the sake of argument, one penny per pound as the cost of keeping up the necessary degree of cold on the voyage between Australia and London, the cost price of our mutton landed from the docks in London is still only 3*d.* to 4*d.* per pound.

The question is now narrowed to this. Besides the general risks of the venture, for which some allowance has been made in the progress of my calculations, there is the risk that 933*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* will not be sufficient for the expenses of keeping 100 tons of meat down to, say, 35 deg. Fahrenheit, on the voyage from Melbourne to London.

Per Contra—Cent. per cent. Profit at least.  
Cost.  
100 tons of finest Australian mutton, at 4*d.*  
per lb.....£3,733 6 8  
Insurance, landing, delivery, brokerage, and  
dock dues, 10 per cent.....373 6 8  
£4,106 13 4

PROCEEDS.  
100 tons sold at 9*d.* per lb.....£3,400 0 0  
Profit.....4,293 6 8  
£8,400 0 0

I ask your mercantile readers whether a profit like this is not sufficient to cover a great deal of risk

**ROYAL ACADEMY WINTER EXHIBITIONS.**—The Royal Academy has arranged for winter exhibitions of the works of ancient masters and of recently deceased artists for both 1873 and 1874.





[LEINA'S VISIT TO NAT.]

## THE SECRET OF SCHWARZENBURG.

### CHAPTER VI.

'Tis sweet to hear the watchdog's honest bark  
Bay deep-mouthed welcome as we draw near home;

'Tis sweet to know there is an eye will mark  
Our coming and look brighter when we come.

Byron.

ROCK HOUSE was in consternation, and the Foss family had retired to the library for the eleventh time to a consultation, which ended, as the previous discussions had done, in a hopeless dismay.

"I'm sure I don't know what to do with her," exclaimed even Theodosia, the invincible. "It will never do to let her get ill. But how dare we disobey such a serious charge as that letter contained?"

"Have you reasoned with her in every possible way?" asked Paul, ruefully. "You women ought to understand a girl's whims."

"I've talked, and talked, and she listens respectfully enough," responded Theodosia, "but when I have finished she just puts up her handkerchief and cries again, sobbing: 'I don't want to be a prisoner. If you want me to die you will keep me shut up in this way.' And I can't make anything else out of her."

"She's grown so pale," remarked Rhoda; "don't you see how her beautiful colour has faded out? When I was helping her to paint the mosses to-day her hand trembled with nothing but weakness."

"You give her air enough. She sits at the open window, doesn't she?" questioned Urbanus, wrinkling his forehead into a tangled knot in his perplexed thought.

"Certainly," responded Theodosia, in her quick, decisive way. "Air and sun enough, plenty. And I've given up requiring too much time to be devoted to her lessons. I confess I was rather too zealous at first. I was forcing her mind too much. But I have remedied all that. Yet still she pines, and grows pale, and weeps half her time. It doesn't seem as if it could be all grieving for freedom just to wander about this dreary old island."

"Yet the eagle and the dove alike chafe against prison bars," spoke up Penelope, in that deep, always-sorrowful voice of hers. "I really think, Paul, it is nothing else ails the child but the cutting off of her wild rambles among the rocks in the pure, invigorating air."

"Have you encouraged her to think so?" demanded Theodosia, turning around quickly. "I know very well you have helped her to the only drawback to her

fine character. You have fostered that mawkish sentimentality that I detest."

"Nay," returned Penelope, in a low and half-stifled voice. "Do not be unjust to me, Theodosia. Heaven knows I would lose the last drop of my heart's blood before I would do ought to harm or trouble Leina. I have been more tender than the rest of you, it may be perhaps not wisely, but it was because I saw the deep yearning of her affectionate nature for loving words and fond caresses. We are not all alike, Theodosia. The child pines now, you see, in a way that mystifies your colder, sterner nature. But I understand it, I think. We must give her back her freedom. No wonder she is dull and weary in this silent house, among such staid, grave people. Let her warm her own at nature's heart—nature, which is always young."

Theodosia flung out her hand in an impatient movement.

"Is it to such an absurd and dreamy life her high destiny calls her? I tell you this very sentimentality and nonsense will be her worst enemy. I have no patience with you, Penelope. One would think your own experience might have taught you wisdom. What are reason and firmness and decision given us for but to rule and guide our minds from such folly and weakness?"

The hollow cheek of Penelope had taken a red flush, whether of anger or shame could not be told, but her voice was meek, though weary.

"It is idle for us to argue, Theodosia. We were made differently. I do not say that you are not wiser and better than I. I never said that in my wildest moments. But I only declare that I understand and therefore sympathize with Leina's moods that are so incomprehensible to you."

"There is something in it, Theodosia," spoke up Paul, calmly. "You have had a fair trial, and Penelope yielded unmurmuringly to your desire that she should not interfere at all with the girl. We have left Leina to your management, and she has grown worse. Rhoda has also tried, and failed. Urbanus and I have endeavoured to coax and reason with her, but without impression. I say it is but right and fair that Penelope should try her way. You must send her to Leina."

"To encourage her dreamy folly," returned Theodosia, indignantly. "I must say I wonder at you, Paul. Do you mean that, if Penelope says so, Leina is to resume her free rambles over the island in defiance of that warning?"

"We have not seen the slightest sign of danger. We know very well these simple people here would aid us in resisting any attempt to snatch her away.

Indeed, it seems absurd to suspect any danger here. But one of us could follow every step she made, without seeming to be on the watch," continued Penelope, eagerly. "Is not that better than to see her sweet face pale and weary, and to watch her gentle temper become irritable and morbid?"

"Have you talked with her to-day?" asked Paul.

Penelope smiled wistfully, and there was a hungry pathos in her voice.

"Nay, Paul. I have not looked upon her face for a whole week."

"Theodosia, that was cruel and unkind in you," exclaimed Paul.

"Penelope has a way of weakening my influence by a single look," returned Theodosia, drily. "I asked her to stay away from Leina for that reason. I know very well you all think I am cold and hard. Very well, it does not disturb me; for I myself know that I scorn to turn aside from duty for any weakness of the flesh. The rest of you are eager to pet the child; you have left all the correction to me. Some day she will be wise enough to see which was the true kindness and which the best friend."

Penelope had risen from her seat. She crossed the room with slow steps, trying to hide the eagerness which sent a tremulous quiver to her pulse and a hot flush to her cheek.

"You meant for me to go, Paul? You are willing, Theodosia?" she faltered, when she laid her hand on the door knob.

They both responded yes, and Penelope hurried out, closing the door behind her with a low gasp of relief.

She crossed the narrow entry with swift steps, and then noiselessly unclosed the door, which gave her a view of the graceful figure which was curled up in the great white easy-chair.

The fair head was drooping, the starry eyes downcast, the red lips curved downward wearily, the whole attitude that of hopeless dejection.

"My little Leina!" spoke Penelope, the deep voice growing rich with thrilling tenderness.

"Oh, dear Auntie Pen! Have they let you come?" cried out the girl, springing up and coming to meet her with bounding steps.

Penelope gathered the graceful young form into her yearning arms, and sat down with it in the great chair.

"Leina, little one, it is a whole week since I have seen you," she murmured. "Have you dreamed how long and weary it has been for me?"

"I should think I might," returned Leina, with spirit. "I have been dull enough to count the se-

sands. I have longed so for you; but I didn't ask. I knew very well Aunt Theodosia meant it as part of my punishment that I shouldn't see you, and I didn't mean she should see how it tried me. Oh, Auntie Pen, I'm so glad to see you. There's a heart in you and your love is true and living."

And the dewy-red lips showered their loving kisses over the faded, sorrow face, which bloomed and glowed under the tender light that shone from the dark eyes until it was really handsome.

But while she held the little hands and stroked tenderly the restless fingers Penelope said:

"Nay, my Leina, you must not be unjust. They all love you, every one of them love you."

But the pretty head gave a wilful shake.

"It is a very proper love, such as the head sanctions, Auntie Pen; but yours—yours is true, living love, bubbling right out of the heart. I should have starved but for you, Auntie Pen. Aunt Theodosia would say I was talking nonsense, but I am not, it is the truth."

Penelope choked back the sob that rose to her throat, but she could not dry away the dew of tears that flooded her eyes.

She bent down to kiss the fair, smooth forehead.

"Yes, it is the truth, Leina—Heaven knows it is the truth."

"Will you tell me, Auntie Pen, what this new movement means? Do you know I am to be locked up in this dreary old house—that I am to have no more rambles on the rocks, no more lonely strolls on the beach, no more pleasant little snatches of talk with the fishermen and their children? Worst of all, I cannot go to Nat's cottage nor meet my darling Rena! Auntie Pen, tell me what they mean. Do they intend to make a fossil of me? I tell you it was dreary and intolerable enough before, but this will kill me!"

The words came swiftly and with passionate emphasis; the eyes flashed, the slender frame quivered, the little hands worked tremulously.

"Dear child, it is done in well meaning. The case is peculiar. Do not speak so bitterly, as if it was wanton cruelty on their part," returned Penelope, evidently deeply distressed by this appeal.

"But it is cruel, nevertheless," retorted Leina. "Why am I so surrounded with mystery? It is cruel—yes, even in you, Auntie Pen—to conceal the truth, whatever it may be!"

"I cruel?" stammered Penelope. "Oh, my lamb, don't say it, for it stabs worse than a sword. Ah, Heaven! because it is true! Leina, Leina, I own it! I have been cruel, wickedly cruel, to you; and yet I would do this moment to save you from sorrow or danger. Oh! for my great love's sake, say that you forgive me! This once, let me hear you say it, Leina!" She was pale as ashes; her whole frame quivered beneath the inward agony.

The girl half-shrank away, terrified at such vehemence of passion.

"Auntie Pen," she stammered, "you frighten me. I don't understand you."

Penelope drew a long breath, as if gathering up strength to conquer herself. She smiled slowly and cheerily.

"No, you do not understand me, poor child—how should you?—but you love me, and will try to forgive me?"

"I didn't mean that it was you!" cried Leina, remorsefully, with a warm gush of tears. "I know you would tell me if they would let you. I don't blame you, Auntie Pen."

She was strained close and hard against Penelope's breast.

"My darling! my precious! try not to, because it hurts me so; and yet I confess that I deserve it—deserve the worst you can say."

Then she turned her head, and looked off, far off, to the line where sea and sky blended in a misty cloud. Leina watched her silently. She had grown familiar with the look, and knew that it meant one of Penelope's moods of abstraction. What would not the young girl have given for the power to look within that busy brain, and follow its wanderings into the unknown life which it lived alone!

She waited as patiently as she might, but finally gave a restless sigh, and nestled closer, calling just in the tone she would have used had her friend been in the next room.

"Auntie Pen! Auntie Pen!"

And, with a long-drawn gasp, Penelope came back to her.

"Well, Leina?"

"What is to be done? Will they let me go for a walk?"

"I think so, with me for company."

Despite her desire to the contrary Leina's ingenuous countenance fell.

"What, my pet, will my presence prove such a drawback?" asked Penelope, sorrowfully.

"No, oh, no; only I must go to Nat's. He is home

again, Uncle Urbanus says; and I so long to see him and to hear of the new wonders he has discovered, and to admire the fresh specimens he has found. He is so bright and entertaining that I love dearly to hear him talk."

"Well, Leina, why will any of this be spoilt by my presence?"

"It wouldn't for me—don't think it would, Auntie Pen. I'm not such a wicked, ungrateful thing as that; but old Nat is never the same when any of you are near. I can't explain it, but I can see it readily enough. He is like another creature when Rena and I are there by ourselves."

Penelope gave a little start.

"Old Nat! she muttered. "What if—but no; it is impossible—utterly impossible!"

"What is impossible, Auntie Pen? Hardly anything, I should say, with dear old Nat. He can accomplish marvels. Is there anything you want him to do?"

Penelope shook her head.

"But I think you and I will pay him a visit, Leina. I am quite sure they will not let you go without one of us; and unless you prefer Theodosia—"

Here there was a little twinkle in the speaker's eyes, at which Leina laughed merrily, and then stopped her mouth with kisses.

The silvery peal of laughter echoed across the little entryway to the waiting group, upon which all but Theodosia smiled broadly.

"There now! Penelope has cheered her already!" exclaimed Paul. "I tell you, Theodosia, you must allow Penelope to have more hand in the girl's management. It is somewhat as she says. She understands her better than the rest of us."

"If only she makes her laugh I suppose it is not to be minded how she is spoilt and ruined," returned Theodosia, indignantly.

Paul's reply was diverted by the opening door and Penelope's appearance. She walked up to him and asked, hurriedly:

"Have you any objection to my taking her down to the old hermit's cabin? You know she has been in the habit of going there. You or Urbanus may follow at a safe distance if you like."

"I can't see any harm," returned Paul.

"Then we will go at once."

Penelope turned back for her shawl and prim gray sun-bonnet, and Leina came dancing out with her hat-ribbons flying and her curls keeping them gay company.

Paul and Urbanus both followed, just near enough to keep the two figures in sight, and saw them safely into the hermit's house, and then one remained for guard and the other strolled slowly down to the wharf.

Nat had opened the door for them. He was a man of tall figure, fine and straight, and athletic of limb, with long hair of soft brown just streaked with gray, which fell down from his chin in a patriarchal beard, and hung in curling locks around his neck, in the ancient, obsolete fashion, and yet it was picturesque enough.

Leina believed Nat to be one of the handsomest men in the world. She found a head among her pictures representing a noble cavalier of the times of Queen Bess, and declared, noble as it was, it could not compare with Nat's.

It was true enough, as she said, that he kept a particular manner for her benefit. No one else saw exactly that courtly gentleness and graceful gallantry which were always at this girl's service.

Now as he perceived her companion there came a shade of formality to cover the bright smile which had responded to hers. He bowed silently and set Penelope a chair, then began to gather up the litter upon the table—wax and scissors and needles and a box of bright-coloured silk spoils.

Leina took up the brilliant little atom upon which he had been at work.

"A new humming-bird! Oh, Nat, how splendid he is. He is equal to a whole set of jewels. Where did you get him?"

The taxidermist told her the story. But quick-witted, ardent-souled Leina missed the accustomed spirit and enthusiasm.

She gave a restless, impatient glance toward her companion.

Nat saw it, and his lip just trembled beneath a restrained smile. Penelope saw it also, and her forehead wrinkled into a little frown.

She arose, however, and went away to the other corner of the room and bent over the miniature tree, set thickly with stuffed birds of all varieties. Then she took up one of the volumes lying on the table, and went away to the farther window, and sat down there, and was presently so absorbed in it as to be oblivious to all things about her.

So at least Leina thought, and Nat himself finally decided. And gradually the pair forgot her presence and fell into the old familiar way.

"Leina, dear," spoke Nat, gaily, as he opened a box at hand, "I brought you a memento of my last ramble. Lend me your hat, and I'll give you something prettier, to my mind, than those ribbons."

Leina pulled off the hat, watching his movements with shining eyes, and Nat fastened at the front a small twig of coral rose-berries on which was perched, so delicately as to seem just poised there with its outspread wings, a tiny morsel of a humming-bird glistening with as lovely colours indeed as if set with jewels.

Leina, naturally enough, uttered a girl's cry of transport.

Penelope must indeed have been lost in her book for she never turned her eyes.

"For me? Oh, Nat, that exquisite little creature, how charming it looks. Who but you would ever have thought of such a lovely ornament?"

"Nay, I don't claim the originating it, my child. I saw a young lady sporting a great awkward gull, and straightway I understood how becoming a humming-bird would be for a certain somebody's hat."

"You dear old Nat! What a darling it is! But," here Leina paused, hat in hand, looking down wistfully at the life-like semblance of the restless little beauty which had gathered its last honey-drop; "but—dear, dear! how happy it must have been. They do seem so happy, all the birds. And the humming-bird somehow seems to be of a finer and daintier nature than the others. I hold my breath always when I watch them. Oh, Nat, I don't believe I like it, after all. It was killed to make a fine ornament for my hat. Poor little humming-bird!"

And by the time she had ended the sweet voice was tremulous, and the bright drops slipped through the silken eyelashes and splashed down upon her cheek.

Nat smiled upon her tenderly.

"Do you think I would have given it to you pierced by that cruel thought, my tender-hearted Leina? Take comfort with the humming-bird, my child. It was not killed for you. Indeed it was not killed at all. It died in a cage—pined, I suppose, for its tropical home, for it was brought alive from South America. It is of a very rare species—too valuable to be neglected in any way. I think the man who lost it shed genuine tears when that pretty head began to droop. The only cruelty that you can connect with it was the taking it when a fledgling and giving it a cage."

"Poor little humming-bird!" repeated Leina, softly, but she looked up into Nat's face with a tender smile, adding: "But I shall wear it now. Is this one like it, the one you are at work on?"

"No; not so beautiful a creature, but the nearest approach to yours I could get. This also is intended for a hat. I must try to be impartial to my little friends."

"For Rena?" exclaimed Leina, with a glad laugh.

"Oh, Nat, that was well thought indeed. Will she come to-day? It is so long, so long since I saw her. I have not had time to tell you what a dreary time I have had of late. I have had my cage door barred too."

"You!" exclaimed Nat, but in a carefully modulated voice. "What do you mean, Leina?"

She gave a short, impatient sigh.

"It is another of the mysteries, I suppose. One can never tell what will be next. I have been informed that danger of some sort threatens me, and I have not been allowed to leave the house at all. I should not have come to-day but for Auntie Pen."

"Danger to you?" repeated Nat, in a perplexed tone. Then he glanced again toward the straight, prim figure by the window. But the head never moved, the eyes were fixed upon the book. So he repeated, more earnestly: "How can there be any danger for you, my child, in this secluded, lonely spot?"

Leina shrugged her shoulders.

"Don't ask me. Haven't I always told you I was a being of mystery? Haven't I said, again and again, that I am either an enchanted princess or an Undine, or a sprite of some sort, to whom a startling change may come at any moment? I don't think anything would really astonish me, not even to find myself some morning in a strange land a beggar or a queen. What you tell me about this humming-bird has filled me with a strange and yearning sympathy. I think I can understand some of its house-sick longings, its vague yearnings, its dim revelations of another life belonging to it, but never found. Poor nestling! No wonder the honey provided in a common vessel lacked the ambrosia of the amber-drop sipped from the fragrant heart of the rose and honey-suckle. Do you suppose he dreamed about liberty, and so pined and died?"

How innocent and beautiful she looked standing before him, still holding the hat with its new acquisition turned so that she could look down upon it, her head drooping, her eyes downcast. The taxidermist's heart yearned over her as he gazed.

"My child," he answered, "do you think I will say



yes when you are already associating yourself with that soul-less creature? You must put away your dreams if they will make you pine and droop also. I am sorry I brought the bird to you. Why can't you take these trivial pleasures without looking into them for a sorrowful meaning?"

"Oh, you mustn't think I don't like this darling little fairy creature. I do, indeed I do, Nat, and I thank you so much for it. But I must associate myself with it; you must allow that, for the fancy has come and I can't put it away. I think I am something of the sort. I can mate my experience to my imaginings of his. I think of myself, taken away from the home-nest too early to know any more than dim intuitions tell me, yet ever yearning vaguely for what was there. Nat, you are always calling me odd little names, now you must leave them all for one. Call me Humming-bird, Nat."

"A lovely little humming-bird, certainly," returned Nat, smilingly; "but with that pensive face hardly like the gay little jewel who flies so airily. Don't look so grave, birding."

Neither of them saw that Penelope's eyes had darted towards them, flashing with a new intelligence. Neither noticed how her fingers clenched themselves upon the book she held.

Leina tossed back her drooping tresses, and laughed, as she crowned them with her hat.

"There now you see I am crowned and christened at once. Your Humming-bird, Mr. Nat. I can be as gay as you like. Go to work on the other, and tell me if that has a history too."

"No, indeed, no more histories," he returned, but took up the feathered skin and resumed his work. "I am getting this ready that my other little visitor may not feel herself slighted."

"You have given me the more beautiful bird. It proves that I am right. The rarest should have been Leina's, only for the little foreigner's history which made you see that he belonged to me by right. Oh, Nat, how I wish you were as wise in prophecy as in other things. You should tell me my fortune, and explain everything that puzzles me."

"No," returned he, gravely, "I do not think I should."

She faced him with a sudden glint of indignation in her eyes.

"What, you—you too, would keep me in blindness and ignorance? Have you found out anything about me, Nat, anything that you are afraid to have me know?"

Penelope turned a leaf in the book, and seemed to be reading on in that same rapt fashion, but under the lowered lids her eyes gleamed fiercely, and every faculty was merged in that of listening.

Nat's answer came slowly, and in an emphatic tone.

"No, Humming-bird, I have not learned anything new beyond what you have just told me. If I were you I would not torment myself by thinking there is anything to be discovered."

"How can I help it when they are always hinting at some startling development?" she returned.

"They! Do you mean your relatives?"

"I suppose so, though I question, often enough, if they have a drop of kindred blood in their veins. If it were not for Auntie Pen—"

She stopped short, struck with consternation at the recollection of Penelope's presence.

Both turned instantly to look at her, but she neither moved nor spoke.

The next instant, however, she sprang up, and turned toward them a look of alarm, exclaiming:

"Some one is coming. A stranger has just crossed the window."

Nat turned to the door, but before he reached it it was flung open, and a gentleman, a young and handsome one, crossed hastily to his side, saying, swiftly, in a foreign tongue:

"So I find you at last—you strange old fellow! By Jupiter! you are odder than this odd country you have chosen. Didn't you get my letter, telling you I had arrived, that you left me to track you out like a spy? I thought—"

Here he came to an abrupt pause, for stepping farther into the room he discovered Leina standing there, with her bright, interested face looking forth from under the jaunty hat, on whose brim perched the little feathered jewel.

There went a swift and eloquent change across the handsome face.

The hat came off with a swift movement, and the gentleman bowed gracefully, apologizing in good English but with a German accent.

"I beg to be pardoned. I was not aware I was intruding upon company."

"Let us go," cried Penelope, seizing upon Leina's hand and hurrying her forth, as if she feared to see her snatched away.

The girl waved a parting gesture to her friend, and was dragged unceremoniously away by the

frightened guardian, who scarcely drew breath until she met Paul hurrying toward them.

"What stranger is that?" demanded Paul.

"I don't know who he is," answered Penelope, but her hand shook, and she kept her face averted.

"Some one to see old Nat," said Leina. "Why did you hurry so, Auntie Pen?"

Meantime within the cabin the stranger had seized upon the hermit's hand.

"This bright, this beautiful creature, tell me, tell me, if it is possible it can be she?"

Nat looked annoyed and perplexed as he replied: "It is. But how came you here? why this most unexpected appearance? Explain, if you are Count Stephano, as I suppose."

"I escaped by the most charming stratagem. If you please I am not Stephano at all. I come for you to perfect me in English ways, for I am at present named Aubrey Dalberg, and Count Stephano is an invalid there at Schwarzenburg."

"What farce is this?" demanded the hermit, impatiently.

"A charming farce, dear sir, from beginning to end—a charming farce. To think of finding you in such luxurious quarters! And he looked around the little cabin, first contemptuously, and then with a gay laugh. "And I gave out that my errand was to bespeak some English birds for my museum."

"And came near betraying me, and ruining the cause," returned Nat. "I am sorry you have come. I think they might have trusted me to manage things. However, you are here, and I must make the best of it. They are all well, of course?"

"Yes, of course, all but Stephano, as I told you," returned the light-hearted fellow, laughing merrily again. "And poor Roderich, who was a little choleric when I left, you know his over-sensitiveness; he couldn't relish the innocent little stratagem played upon the Englishman, who is a fine fellow, as I mean to be—I won't disgrace the character. By-the-by, when will that fair visitor return? She has taken my heart by storm. What name do you call her by?"

"Humming-bird," replied Nat, shortly. "Look here, Stephano, if you count on help of mine you must obey my instructions."

"I suppose I can use my eyes, your highness?" laughed the other. "Does this palace of yours afford such a thing as a glass of wine? I will pledge you the Humming-bird's health."

"I wish you had stayed at home," cried Nat again, ruefully.

#### CHAPTER VII.

Man! Then pendulum betwixt a smile and tear. Byron.

THE warm sunshine streaming in through a high window, whose curtain was drawn aside, laid its ardent kiss upon Aubrey Dalberg's forehead, and the sleeper stirred uneasily.

Two grave, attentive faces were watching every movement. The Baron Valentin made a warning gesture to his daughter and whispered:

"He will soon awake. I must speak the first word to him, but do you come promptly at my call. Remember, my dear Viola, it will all depend upon your tact and discretion. He will not dare to be angry or indignant with you."

The Lady Viola bent her stately head. Her face was pale, her eyes flashing with suppressed excitement, as she moved noiselessly from the chamber and took up her station just outside the door of the little dressing-room.

The baron stood motionless watching the recumbent figure, which turned over, flung up an arm, drew a long, sighing breath, and then abruptly opened its eyes.

Aubrey rose up quickly from the bed, stared bewilderedly from the sunshine to his clothed limbs, and then looked up into the baron's face with a confused, apologetic smile.

"I beg your pardon, my lord, but I really do not remember, I cannot understand—"

"Give yourself no uneasiness. You are in good hands. I hope you do not find yourself ill," replied the baron, in as cool and calm a voice as possible.

"Have I been ill? I feel strangely weak and languid," questioned Aubrey, more urgently. "I do not remember this room either, nothing is familiar."

"A little indisposition, that is all that has been the matter. You must have some coffee and you will be all right."

Aubrey walked to the marble ewer and poured with an unsteady hand the cool water into the basin, and plunged his face into it. He turned around a brighter countenance and clearer eyes.

"I remember a singular torpor creeping over me as we came up to your son's room. Did I reach it at all? I have certainly no remembrance of it."

But to his surprise the baron had disappeared and through the other door came Lady Viola, bearing a small silver salver in her hand on which steamed with refreshing aroma a dainty cup of coffee.

"You are ready for the coffee I am sure, Mr. Dalberg," she said, with a gracious smile.

"I thank you. I am ashamed to see how much trouble I am making," stammered Aubrey, colouring a little with mingled vexation and embarrassment.

"Do not stand I beg of you," resumed Viola, in that same frank, cordial tone. "You are looking pale, and no wonder after such a profound slumber. But the coffee will bring back colour and strength both. I hope you find it agreeable to your taste?"

Aubrey took the cup with a grateful, responsive smile, and sipped slowly at the delicious beverage.

"Thank you, I find it exquisite, more agreeable than the wine you gave me for your toast. When was it? an hour ago, or a week, or a year? I am utterly bewildered, for I find myself dressed as I was then for the journey. But it is broad daylight now, and then it was a moonlight evening. And Count Roderich, I pray you send him to me or the valet. I am anxious for an explanation of the mystery."

Viola looked down at him with a dazzling, coquetish smile.

"Nay, my dear Mr. Dalberg. While you are an invalid, I am myself to be your nurse and attendant. I will send our faithful Max to you presently, but he will be utterly unable to answer your questions. Are you anxious to escape my company?"

"Indeed I am not, your ladyship, only—only—"

and here Dalberg paused, at a loss how to finish the sentence.

The smile had faded from off her high-bred face. She set her lips together with resolution.

"Well, sir, I am ready to answer you. What will you know first?"

"Why I did not go away as I intended? And how long ago it was that I made ready?"

"It was last evening. This is now three o'clock of the afternoon. And you did not go because you fell down in a dead stupor from which you have only now aroused. Roderich went on without you."

"It is very singular," repeated Aubrey, with his eyes upon the floor. "I cannot conceive why such a stupor should have come upon me."

"But I can make it very plain, Mr. Dalberg. You were under the effects of a powerful narcotic."

"Good Heavens! Von Schubert must have done it!" exclaimed Aubrey.

"No," returned the cool, clear voice, the dazzling eyes fixed unblenchingly upon his face. "Don't accuse Von Schubert of any more than he deserves. It was I, Mr. Dalberg. The wine you alluded to but a moment since was drugged."

"The wine drugged!"

Genuine astonishment and consternation were plainly perceptible in the young gentleman's voice.

His colour faded again into pallor.

"Shall I bring you some more coffee?" she asked, eagerly, and then laughed at the perplexity of his look. "I don't wonder you are amazed at my effrontery, Mr. Dalberg. After just confessing to having drugged your wine I coolly propose to bring you another beverage. But I declare to you by everything sacred that the coffee is harmless."

He sat staring at her in silence.

Unconsciously he put his hand into his pocket.

He drew it out hastily, and went diving into the other, searching evidently for something that was not to be found.

"Don't look for the bank-book or the papers, for you will not find them. My dear Mr. Dalberg, I don't wonder you are horrified. You feel as if you had fallen into a den of villany."

"Will your ladyship be good enough to call the baron, or send a servant for him?"

Still she smiled down upon him, cool and calm and dazzlingly beautiful.

"Nay, not yet—not quite yet, Mr. Dalberg. Since I am the only one who can answer you freely, it would be better not to send me away until you are thoroughly enlightened."

He looked at her uneasily.

The white lids dropped slowly over the dazzling eyes, a look of seeming weariness and pain crossed her face.

The lips curled poutingly like a grieved child's.

"Alas," she murmured, sorrowfully, "he distrusts me thoroughly. He will put no more confidence in me. Oh, that I could show him the sore trait that drove me to it."

"Nay, Lady Viola," said Aubrey, gravely, "I am hardly prepared for any judgment at all in the matter. Since I am still so much in the dark concerning it all I cannot conceive any reason why you should wish to prolong my stay here. But the loss of my private papers, and especially of the passport made ready for my departure, may greatly embarrass.

me, for you are aware I leave Germany on Monday."

"That is impossible, Mr. Dalberg," she answered, firmly, although the changes of her face were rapid and agitated. "Oh, be chivalrous and generous! It is after all so little a thing for you to relinquish and so momentous and vital a movement for us."

She clasped her white hands imploringly, and bent upon him wistfully the eyes that were brighter still with gathering tears.

"Will your ladyship be good enough to speak plainly to me? What are your wishes? What can I do?"

"Oh, so much, Mr. Dalberg. You can make yourself our benefactor and friend for ever. Indeed, indeed, if you could understand all the circumstances you would consent. Remain here quietly and as contentedly as you can one little month, taking Stephano's place and letting us do our very best to beguile the weariness of the dragging hours. Oh, it does not seem so very much, only a month. And then to go out into the blessed freedom of our own privileged land. Think what it must be for us, for my poor father, whose hope of release at its best only promises for years, and be compassionate."

"Your father's hope of release," repeated Aubrey, and a light broke upon him suddenly. "Good Heavens! he is a prisoner here, and Von Schubert is his keeper."

"Yes, he is a prisoner, and Von Schubert is his jailer," repeated Lady Viola, in a voice of intense bitterness.

"He is a state prisoner, which is the most hopeless of all, and all the heart and strength and many-eyed and myriad-armed vigilance of the royal power guards every avenue of escape against him."

"A prisoner for political offences?" questioned Aubrey.

"The prince hates him. That, I suppose, means the same," replied Theresa. "I do not attempt to deceive you by denying that he was accused of a deeper crime—accused and tried, but, mark you, they could not prove him guilty. And yet instead of sending him forth clear from the vile slanders the royal tyrant stepped forward and himself pronounced sentence. They could not deny his claim here, and they dared not attempt it. But they took the control of the proud old estate into their charge and shut him up here a prisoner for life. What do you think of that for tyranny, for wickedness, for despotic rule? Bless your own good fortune that you are the favoured son of another land, Mr. Dalberg."

Her chest heaved, her eyes flashed, her hands were clenched. It was plain all the fire and passion of her strong nature rose up against the cruel circumstances that hedged her in.

"Count Roderich should have told me that before he brought me here," faltered Aubrey Dalberg.

"Then you would have refused to come," she replied, quickly. "No, that would not have done at all. It would not have carried out our plan nor have outwitted Von Schubert as we have done now."

An exulting smile crossed her lips as she resumed:

"Through you, Mr. Dalberg, we have received our first ray of hope. Do not, I beg you, be cruel enough to quench it. We were all guarded and watched. Roderich, to be sure, had freedom to come and go, but a spy follows every step of his, and his eager and urgent petition for permission to leave Germany is continually refused. There is but one hope, you understand, for my father's release from this miserable life, for our escape from this shame and wrong. Somewhere we are sure they have hidden a witness through whom it is possible for us to obtain triumphal acquittal. And we believe it is solely to prevent our finding that one that we are all, through one pretence or another, immured here. Do you think we have borne it tamely and meekly without an attempt to overcome even such powerful odds? Mr. Dalberg, do not be angry with me beyond the hope of my winning your forgiveness. It was I who drugged your wine, and helped to carry out successfully a plot we have hardly dared whisper to each other lest the prince's minions should catch the meaning. Stephano went hence with Roderich, deceiving Von Schubert and all the others, while he personated you. As Aubrey Dalberg he will leave Germany, and we, remaining here, will weep and pray that he may succeed in his mission, devoting to you all that lies in our power of entertainment with the deepest and most fervent gratitude. Say that you are not angry with me, Mr. Dalberg."

She stood before him flushed and eager. The bright, triumphant eyes belie the meekly drooping head and humble tone.

"It will be very awkward for me," stammered Aubrey. "What shall I do for a passport? And I must certainly go next week."

"Nay, that is impossible. Stephano must be safely beyond their reach before any knowledge of our

stratagem transpires outside this chamber. There is only one servant, a faithful fellow devoted to my father, who knows what has been done. He waits outside, and my father and myself take care of our invalid Stephano entirely. We had done it for a fortnight previous to your arrival, so Von Schubert will suspect nothing. I confess that it is as you say awkward and unpleasant for you, but for us it is a desperate case, and we can only beg you to make the best of the circumstances. Will it really be so extremely irksome playing the part of an invalid and submitting yourself to my best attentions?"

She favoured him with a dazzling smile, to which the young gentleman returned another, a little lugubrious and doubtful.

"You have no spirits, and it is not to be wondered at. I said I would have my luncheon with Stephano, and no doubt our good Max has laid the table in the anteroom. Come and share it with me, and try to believe things are not so bad as they might be."

She led the way, and found, as she anticipated, a delicate repast set out upon a small oval table.

The man retired promptly, and took his station without the door.

Lady Viola presided with ease and grace, and a cheerfulness Aubrey was not yet able to share.

"Another cup of coffee, my friend—and I assure you it is pure and unadulterated. Think how easy it would be for us to keep you in a stupor all this time; and see that we do not mean to injure you in any possible way that can be avoided," she said. "Besides, one must be reconciled to the inevitable—you cannot help yourself."

At that moment there came a low and cautious tap, twice repeated, at the door. It was undoubtedly some signal of warning, for the lady paused abruptly and looked round in consternation.

Then they both heard distinctly Von Schubert's clear, incisive voice speaking without to Max.

"Present my compliments to Lady Viola and say that I would speak with her for a moment."

Aubrey sprang up, and took a step towards the door. She was just telling him there was no help for him.

"Why should he not show her that he was not a cowed simpleton to be scared by threats or cajoled by a beautiful woman's blandishments? He stretched out his hand, he opened his lips to call Von Schubert's name."

Viola read his purpose. She was deadly pale, but did not lose her presence of mind. Sinking down upon her knees and clasping his hands, she besought his mercy in the most eloquent gestures. Her lips trembled, the tears poured down her cheeks, the hot thrill from the slender fingers clinging to his quickened his own pulse.

Aubrey shut his lips firmly, walked back, and took the seat again.

The strange girl sprang up, flung her arms about his neck a single moment, and left a kiss upon his forehead. Then she skimmed across the room, closed the door behind her, and vanished. He heard her calm, even tones replying to Von Schubert.

"Thank you for your disinterested solicitude, Herr Von Schubert. My poor Stephano is ill enough, but we fancy there is a little improvement this morning. So we have renewed our hope. I am sure you congratulate us."

Aubrey did not catch the gentleman's reply, but she spoke again, coldly:

"Thank you. I imagine it will be some weeks before the poor fellow will consider himself fit for company of any sort. I find a man's convalescence is more trying to the nurse than the height of illness. If you will excuse me I will return to him."

She came back smiling gratefully upon Aubrey.

"You are so good and kind! I knew you would be. Poor Roderich was in an agony of apprehension concerning your behaviour, but I told him I was certain you would be reasonable and generous. I must write to Roderich and let him know that all is safe. The letter will be examined by some of Von Schubert's minions, if he do not read it himself. No matter. I can make him understand my meaning without betraying anything to them. I shall know, after Monday, through his letter, if Stephano is safely off. Oh! what a relief—what a blessed relief it will be to know he is safely away from their Argus eyes! Then, at last, I shall begin to hope that our malign fortunes are changing."

They finished the meal in silence, and Aubrey was compelled to acknowledge that he had improved his condition mentally as well as physically.

"Now tell me what you will have. Do you solace yourself with the seductive spell of cigar or meerschaum? Or shall I bring you books or pictures? Or would you like me to sing to you? You are monarch in that respect. Make known your will and I obey."

"The song, by all means," returned Aubrey, flinging himself upon the luxurious lounge, and amusing himself by the resolution that he would revenge him-

self upon the situation by being as autocratic as the Czar of All the Russias.

She brought her guitar, and sang with an evident effort to please her listener. Just as she finished the door opened softly and Baron Valentin came in. His face was clouded and embarrassed, but he held out his hand promptly.

"I trust that Viola has persuaded you to forgive us the trick we have played upon you, Mr. Dalberg," he said, in a deprecating voice.

"She has convinced me that it is idle to resent it, and wise to make the best of the situation," returned Aubrey; "but I should be very glad of your assurance that I shall not find myself implicated with the authorities here in consequence, and of an explanation concerning my prospect of obtaining another passport."

"Your consul can manage it. Roderich had no question about it. The greatest danger lies in the fear of discovery before the passport has accomplished its work. I shall count the very minutes until Monday is past," he replied, drawing a long and burdened breath.

"Take heart, dear father. If we have cheated Von Schubert, the prime minister of all the foxes, why need we fear for the rest?" laughed Viola.

(To be continued.)

## GLIMPSSES OF SOCIETY.

### CHAPTER VII.

USUALLY Edward Zane was up at seven and ready for breakfast within half an hour from that time, but on the morning after his carouse the clock on his chamber mantelpiece was striking ten when he awoke. His head ached as if it would split, he was parched with thirst, and when his patient young wife, pale and sad, handed him a goblet of ice-water he drank it off eagerly and asked for another.

He seemed to expect a scolding, and braced his nerves up for it as much as he could, but the wife only said:

"Shall I turn on water in the bath for you, Edward?"

"If you please," he said, in a voice tremulous from shame.

He dared not trust himself to say more. What could he say? He had no reasonable excuse to offer. He did not dare to look in her face, or he would have seen how pale and weary she was.

She went and prepared his bath, and then told him she would go and see that Mary cooked a nice hot breakfast for him.

"I am a brute," muttered Edward Zane as he rose shaking from head to foot from the reaction of his last night's carouse—"yes, a heartless brute!"

And he staggered off to the bath-room.

He was in error.

Brutes—quadrupeds that is—never get intoxicated, and seldom ill-treat their mates.

In an hour, dressed, yet looking miserable, with purple-hued face and swollen eyes, Edward Zane came down to the breakfast-room.

The moment he entered Anna touched the bell, and Mary, previously instructed, at once brought up a much better breakfast than he usually eat down to.

In silence Anna poured out his coffee and sweetened it, and placed toast and other delicacies within his reach.

He sipped a little coffee, but he had no appetite for food—a loathing feeling which he could not overcome made him turn from everything before him.

"You do not eat—I fear you are ill!" his wife said at last.

"I don't feel very well. I was up too late. The reception at the club took so long," he muttered.

Then as he looked at her to see how she took his lame excuse he noticed her appearance.

Her hollow eyes, her pale cheeks alarmed him.

"It is you who are ill, Anna—white as a sheet!" he cried. "Shall I go for a doctor at once?"

"No, Edward, no, it is only want of rest and anxiety. I shall be better by-and-bye."

"Try and eat, please Anna."

"I cannot, Edward. I took a cup of coffee at six, when I gave that poor little girl breakfast."

"Where is she now?"

"Mr. Talmage and my father took her away to find her grandparents, and see what could be done for them!"

"Your father? Was he here?"

"Yes, he came with Mr. Talmage, and went to have rooms got ready for the old grandparents of the little girl."

"Yes, that's his way. Always good to the poor. I was poor once."

And Zane tried to smile. It was a poor, sickly effort.

"Did Mr. Evarts ask for me?"



"Yes, Edward, and I told him you were not very well. I had left you to sleep."

"He believed you, of course? Ha! ha! Why didn't you tell him I had been on the spree, and be done with it?"

"Edward, if you have faults, it is my duty to conceal rather than to expose them."

"Indeed! Well, go on with your lecture. I expected it."

This too was said in a tone of sarcasm.

"Edward," said she, gently, "I have no lecture to give, no complaints to make."

"What an angel of forbearance you are!"

His tone and manner were still sarcastic.

Her only reply came from two tears stealing down each pale cheek.

He was touched at last.

Words of anger—tears will reach where words cannot enter.

"Forgive me!—forgive me, my poor little wife! I am worse than a fiend to first wrong and then taunt you. I will strive to do better. But when wine enters my head I forget you, forget everything that is good and right. Forgive me this time, and I will not err again!"

"Dear Edward!" she cried, and her arms were about his neck in an instant, and with her head on his shoulder she wept.

But she shed not tears of sorrow, but joy, for he had made a promise which she hoped he would keep.

"There—there, love, don't cry! Say you forgive me; wipe your precious eyes, and smile as you used to do."

"I do forgive you from my heart, Edward, and I will try to smile as I have always done when you were near. Do you know that it is almost twelve o'clock?"

"Yes—a late hour for breakfast—but it shall not be so again."

"I spoke of the hour because father wished to see you at his counting-house at twelve, if you were able to come down."

"Do you know what for? I resigned my clerkship within an hour after receiving my letter from California. I shall go there no more on business."

"Perhaps he wishes to inform you of the true character of the—the man who escorted you home last night."

"The man? Who was it? I really don't know how I got home last night."

"It was the man who calls himself Count Volchinski. He brought you to the door after midnight, and went away. Then I went out and carried you in and up to your chamber."

"Heavens and earth! Was I so bad as that? I fear you must hate or despise me!"

"No, Edward, no. Such love as mine cannot be killed by cruelty or neglect. I may die, but my love will endure to the last."

"By Jupiter, you are worthy of a better man than I!"

"Not a better man lives on earth than you can be, Edward. Avoid wine and bad associates, be yourself, and we will both be very, very happy!"

"I'll try, darling, I'll try. But I don't want to have your father talk to me. I can stand it from you, but he is so severe when he takes any one to task."

"Well, I will send Mary down with a note, saying you are not well, and asking him to excuse you. And when he comes here I will tell him you will not associate with people whose character may injure you."

"Thank you, dear—thank you; and I will change my clothes and go out for a short walk. The fresh air may take away my headache."

The husband went to his chamber to dress—shall we tell it?—not for a walk, but to keep an appointment with Stella Hayden, who had made him believe she was utterly infatuated with his beauty and captivating manners.

The young wife sat down at her writing-desk to pen a letter to her father, asking him to excuse a visit from Edward, because he was really ill, and also to tell him that her husband had promised to avoid all bad associations in the future.

This she sealed carefully, and directed it; then, ringing for Mary, told her to carry it at once to Mr. Ewart at his counting-house.

"And hasten back, Mary," she added; "for Mr. Zane will be at home, and we will have an early dinner. He ate but little breakfast."

"He eat more than he deserved!" said Mary, in a tone too low to reach the ears of her mistress.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

In the dingy back parlour of a two-storey house sat a fortune teller, who had gained a great name among shop-girls, and even in better circles, as the "Veiled Prophetess."

Outside of the house a very modest sign announced the business and hours of this lady—only two hours a day for consultations, the rest for studying the stars, the sign said. Those hours were from five to seven in the afternoon, and never, except by special engagement, could the Veiled Lady be seen at any other time.

She never appeared to visitors unveiled, and the long black veil of costly lace which she wore quite concealed her features, for it was heavy and thick; but the light of her sparkling eyes was distinctly visible even through it, and her low, musical voice had thrilled many an ear while the listener's heart trembled over the revelations which she made.

"Five o'clock, and time that she was here. Her name—let me see!"

The Veiled Lady consulted her memoranda.

"Georgine Blister," she said. "The first indicative of romance, the last of buras or scalds, and not at all sentimental. But the young girl is the latter, and that is sufficient for my purpose. Ah! Selim, who comes?"

An Ethiopian, black as night, habited in Eastern style, with a white turban on his head, entered and bowed. To him it was she addressed her last question.

"One who was to meet my lady at five—a fair young girl, dressed in black."

"Admit her, cautioning her not to speak until she is spoken to. I am even now in a trance remember."

The Ethiopian bowed his head low upon his hands till his forehead touched them, and retired.

The lady, rising, took a posture as if gazing upon a representation of the starry heavens, painted so well that it seemed as if a part of the wall had been rent away, and so she stood, when a young girl entered—a girl of rarely handsome face, and a form wondrously perfect and womanly for one so young, for she surely was not over eighteen.

But added to the beauty of face and form possessed by this girl there was a soulfulness of expression, a bewitching purity of look, a loving simplicity that was absolutely enchanting to one who revolts at the art and duplicity he meets in the female world.

The young girl advanced into the centre of the room and there paused in silence, looking timidly at the Veiled Lady, who, motionless, seemed to gaze through her veil into the mysteries of the upper world.

The young girl started when the Veiled Lady spoke, though the voice of the latter was low and full of melody.

"Yes, yes, 'tis written by the weird hand of fate and it cannot be altered. They meet, the brave young noble, the descendant of a kingly race, himself a prince, they meet, this noble, dark-eyed man and the sweet young bird of song. They meet to part no more. He will bear her to his grand Italian home by Arno's lovely lake, where the storm cloud never falls and all is a breathing atmosphere of Heaven! Happy, happy Georgine."

"My name—she knows my name!" cried the astonished girl, for she had simply called herself Emma Moore when she made her first visit, unconscious that a music book which she left in the hall had been examined and her real name and residence therein discovered.

Then she had been sent away after a few leading questions had been asked, and a second interview appointed to give the Veiled Lady a chance through her agents to learn all about her that could be known. Now the lady was armed and ready for her work, which we need not say was pure deception.

The instant the young girl spoke the prophetess turned with an imperious air and cried out, sternly:

"Why, rash mortal, why did you speak and break the mystic spell which bound me? Why did you tear from my eyes the loveliest picture they ever dwelt upon?"

"Forgive me, lady, you spoke my name, which I had not told you."

"There is no need for thee to tell thy name, nor yet assume a false one to one who knows all things, past, present and future—to one who from within these walls can see thee in thy little chamber, watching the geraniums as they blossom in thy window, or listening to the bird which carols in thy ear—who, though 'tis hidden in thy bosom, can read the perfumed note received by thee this day just as the sun reached his high meridian."

"Oh, lady, you do indeed know all things. Tell me, quickly tell me what my fate will be, and let me go. I am not afraid, but I dread to stay here."

"Fear not, sweet child of destiny—fear not, for all is sunshine in thy path. Thou art beloved by one who is the soul of honour, the most peerless man in manhood's choicest rank."

"His name, dear lady—his name?"

"I might speak it—though I have never heard it uttered. But 'twould make thee happier to see his face and form in my magic mirror, would it not?"

"Oh, yes, dear lady, yes, if I can but see him there whom I love the last doubt will vanish."

"Then stand where thou art, and count slowly one for each year of thy age. When thou hast done so turn and face a mirror directly behind thee."

Quickly the young girl obeyed. Her count was fast, but not half so fast as the beating of her heart.

Then she turned, and a cry broke from her lips, a cry of wild surprise and joy.

"'Tis he—'tis the count, my own dear, dear Volchinski!" she exclaimed—"in face and form so perfect."

"Are you satisfied?" asked the lady.

"Oh, yes, more than satisfied. And is he really to be mine—mine for ever?"

"Yes—thine for ever!"

"Then I ask no more. Death with him is better than life without him!" sighed the girl.

She sighed because the picture had vanished.

"Your fee, lady—your fee. It is well earned."

She offered half a sovereign.

"Nay, keep it. You have just received enough to pay your board for the lessons you give at Mrs. Brewster's. If I took this it would leave you in debt to your landlady. She is a sour, cross old creature, and would frown were she not paid in full!"

"Oh, lady, you know everything."

"Everything! But fear me not. I am thy friend. Move on in the sunny path before thee—enjoy life while it lasts, and thou wilt be happy. Give thy heart the rein, thy will its own way, for fate will guide thee. And now adieu. There are others who wait. I heard a mystic sound from above which warns me even before my Saracenic slave appears."

"Adieu, sweet lady. My gratitude is yours if I cannot reward you financially."

The lady smiled.

"I am not a gold-worshipper," she said. "I read the stars because I must. It is so ordered. Adieu!"

#### CHAPTER IX.

THE eyes of Mr. Bellamy had been duly lanced and leached, and he had received a caution to shorten his allowance of drink for a day or two from the doctor, who received his fee, took a tumbler of whisky, and left.

He had been gone but a few moments when a man far better dressed than Bellamy's customers usually were entered.

"Something to drink, 'r—something nice? Old Bourbon, or wine all the way from California?" cried Bellamy.

"No," said the stranger. "I did not come for drink—I came for information."

"Information? Faith I'd like to part with what I have in my eyes just now."

"Information, I said."

"Very little of that have I on hand, sir—but I've brandy a thousand years old more or less."

"I don't want your brandy. You've got tenants here, haven't you?"

"To be sure I have—as decent people as you'll find anywhere, sir. There's Judy Kelly and her three babbies, and Jimmy Burke, and Sammy Larkin, the dog-meat man, all on the one floor above us here. And in the garret there's three Chinamen and an organ grinder."

"I mean two very old people, with a beautiful little girl who goes by the name of Nellie."

"The old uns and the girl you mean?"

"I heard by accident that they were tenants of yours, and I want to find the little girl. I'll pay well to get her in my possession."

"You will?"

"Yes; I am not a man of many words. My name is Barnabas Bludge and I am good for all I promise to pay."

"Then why, Mr. Barnabas Bludge, didn't you come here two hours ago? Then you might have had the girl and I mightn't have had these black eyes."

"Why, is she not here still?"

"No, sir; a couple of these white-choked gentry came along and moved them away without a minute's warning about two hours ago."

"Where to?"

"That would be worth your knowing, wouldn't it?"

"It would; and I'll give you a sovereign to tell me."

"Make it ten for luck."

"Well, it shall be ten."

"Then I'll find out as soon as I can and let you know."

"Idiot! I thought you knew now where they were. I have no time to dally here. I will give you twenty pounds if you will find where the girl has gone to and let me know. There is my address on that card. You know them all by sight and I do not."

"I'll find them, sir, for the twenty. I'll put my Dead Rabbits on the scent, and they'll hunt London over. You may rest easy—she shall be found."

"Very well, the money is ready when you can tell me where she is."

Mr. Bludge turned on his heel to leave, but as he did so Bellamy cried out:

"Would you mind answering me a civil question, sir?"

"Yes, should it suit me," answered Mr. Bludge.

"Are you father to the little curly-head?"

"Confound you, no!" shouted the gambler, in reply to the civil question of Mr. Bellamy, and he dashed away as if a sudden frenzy oppressed his brain.

"Well, he's an odd one certainly, that Mr. Barnabas Bludge!" said Bellamy, scratching his bristly head. "He flared up like fireworks with my asking him if he was her father. Sure and she's pretty enough for anybody to be proud of if she weren't poor. And that's her failing and not her fault. Hullo, a carriage at my door! Sure it's a lord—no, a lady, with such a foot as I've never seen the likes of before, and she is getting out of the carriage and coming right in here, and here am I with my black eyes and an old coat on!"

It was true. A carriage, with a driver in livery and a footman by his side, stopped in the narrow, dirty street, and a veiled lady descended when the footman opened the door. She was very richly dressed, but Bellamy could not distinguish her features under the double veil she wore, when she entered and cried out, hastily:

"The little girl! Did Barnabas Bludge carry her away? Speak quickly, man, as you value your life!"

"Does your lady's ladyship mean little curly-headed Nellie?"

"Yes, yes, that is the name. Has he carried her off?"

"No, your ladyship; but he offered me twenty pounds to find her for him."

"I will give you a hundred to bring her to me. Here is my card—keep my name to yourself—Madame Stella Hayden."

"A hundred pounds! She shall be found afore I sleep."

"She was here then? You will not deny that?"

"No, your ladyship—I've no reason to. Her and her old grandad and gran'ma'am were tenants of mine, but some parsons came along and trotted them off to what they said would be better quarters, though a nicer place than mine isn't in all the street."

The lady shuddered.

"Those poor old people and that little child living in such a place as this?" she cried.

"To be sure, ma'am, and a nice place it is too."

"Find them for me, find them, and when they are where I can care for and protect them you shall have two hundred pounds. But you must hasten, for that man Bludge holds a spite against me, which he can only carry out through the possession of that child. You have my card—there's ten pounds in hand now—be faithful to me and earn more."

The lady threw a couple of notes on his counter as she spoke, and turned to re-enter her carriage.

"If you please, ma'am, if you please, would you answer me a civil question?" cried Bellamy.

"What is it?" she answered, stopping and turning toward him.

"Are you mother to the little curly-head?"

"Impertinent idiot!" she cried, angrily, as she turned and sprang into the carriage, which was driven away instantly.

"Three times called idiot this blessed day, but the luck has come sure enough," said Peter, gathering up the money in his dirty, grimy hand and continuing: "How mad it made them both, that civil question of mine. If I get hold of the child, and I will, I'll get my answer before she sees it, and get my two hundred pounds too. But I must be stirring or they'll find her before I do. Ragged Dick, you little rascal, come here and take a drink, for you are just the chap I'm wanting now."

A ragged little elf, dwarfish in size, but old in physiognomy, old and cunning, with snakelike eyes, came forward at this invitation.

"Did you mind the gospel cove as were here a bit ago, taking away the old ones and the girl?" continued Bellamy, addressing the elfish boy.

"Did I mind 'em? D'ye see these?"

The little rascal showed two white linen handkerchiefs which he had stolen from Mr. Merritt and Mr. Talmage.

"I priggled these two wipes, and more than that—I got a dummy!"

"You're a regular swell kid! Let me see the dummy!" cried Peter, in a tone and with a look of intense admiration as he regarded the pocket-book displayed before him. "Why, it's full of flimies—you'd better leave it with me for safety!" cried Bellamy as he opened it and saw a number of bank-notes inside.

"I'm green, ain't I, guv'nor?" cried the archin, put-

ting his thumb to his nose and gyrating his fingers in the air.

"You might be lagged; and who'd bail ye but me?" said the man, reproachfully. "Haven't I minded things for you before?"

"Yes, and kept the bigger part too!" said the boy, saucily.

"Well, I'll be honest this time. I'll keep it safe for half. Here's a name in it and it may help you to find the girl, and that'll be twenty pounds in your pocket. Will you try?"

"Will a mule kick? To be sure I'll try if there's a chance to make twenty pounds!" cried the boy.

"Just you point the way—that's all."

"Well, I'll read the name—I'll have to spell it though. There's an E and a v. That spells Ev. Then there's an s and an r and a t. That spells art. E-v-art—and there it is again with an s to the tail of it. E-v-art E-v-art!"

"Ha, ha! I know him! He's a regular swell and talks gospel like a book!" cried the boy.

"Well, this is his pocket-book, and I reckon he furnished them parsons with the money to get the girl and the old folks away. So if you can get into his crib unbeknown to him you may find the little curly-head!"

"That's so. Keep the dummy for me. I'll trust you this time, but mind if you cheat me I'll be even with you."

"Now I'll count the flimies and then hide them afore there's anybody searching after them!" said Bellamy.

He squatted behind his counter, and, laying the notes out on the box, was busily engaged in counting the money when a gruff voice over his shoulder cried out:

"Halves—d'ye hear? Halves!"

(To be continued.)

#### ANECDOTE OF POPE.

ALEXANDER POPE once received a sharp rejoinder, whereby a pointed hit was made at his diminutive and ill-shaped figure.

The poet was one evening at Burton's Coffee-house, where himself and Swift and Arbuthnot, with several other scholars, were poring over a manuscript copy of the Greek Aristophanes. At length they came across a sentence which they could not comprehend, and as in their perplexity they talked rather loudly they attracted the attention of a young officer who chanced to be in another part of the room. He approached and begged leave to look at the passage.

"Oh, by all means," said Pope, sarcastically. "Let the young gentleman look at it. We shall have light directly."

The young officer took up the manuscript volume, and after a little study and consideration his countenance brightened.

"It is but a slight omission on the part of the scribe," he said. "It only wants a note of interrogation at this point to make the whole intelligible."

Pope saw in an instant that the officer was right; but the thought of being outdone in Greek translation by a mere youth, and a red-coat, plighted him, and with a sharp, bitter twang, he cried out:

"And pray, young sir, what is a note of interrogation?"

"A note of interrogation," answered the officer, surveying the wizened, hunch-backed poet from head to foot with contemptuous look, "is a little crooked thing that asks questions!"

#### MARIGOLD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Image in the Heart," "Sweet Eglantine,"

"The Three Passions," &c., &c.

#### CHAPTER L.

None are all evil—quickening round his heart,  
One softer feeling would not yet depart. *Byron.*

THOUGH young, rash, and impetuous, Arthur Everton had inherited all the pride which had shattered the career of his father and made him the most miserable of men living—unloving and unloved.

He felt that he ought to support the dignity which befit an Earl of Kimbolton—a title which had descended to him through a long line of distinguished ancestors—and he could not entertain any respect for himself, or uphold his position, if he admitted that Carmen was his wife and attempted to introduce into the exclusive and fashionable society of London and the Continent such a designing and low-born adventuress.

In addition to this his mind was swayed by mercenary notions.

His father had, by speculating on the speed and endurance of race horses, wasted what was once a magnificent fortune, and Arthur was absolutely

without means to keep up his status as a peer of England.

No doubt if he could free himself from the trammels which Carmen had cunningly thrown around him, his rank and personal appearance would enable him to captivate an heiress, whose money would place him on a footing of equality with others of his own standing.

To acknowledge Carmen was at once to lower himself to a depth of degradation at which his soul revolted.

It meant also pecuniary ruin, for which even her pretty face and engaging manners would not compensate.

So he determined that he would leave no stone unturned to get rid of her for ever, though the task was one which baffled his ingenuity.

After some consideration Mr. Anglesey exclaimed: "If we prosecute this woman for swindling we shall obtain a conviction, followed by a long term of imprisonment. Knowing her so well as I do, I am of opinion that such a disgrace would break her heart, and that labour, the spare diet and the solitary life of a jail would speedily kill her."

"Death you think better than the divorce court," replied Arthur.

"I do not see how the divorce court can help you. She is legally your wife."

"But think of the fraud of which I was the victim. I fancied I was marrying into an ancient and wealthy English family, as the name of Caruthers, which the gipsy adopted, would have led any one to believe. They lived in style and I was grossly imposed upon."

"There is no doubt of that," Mr. Anglesey replied as he noticed the angry flush rising to the young man's cheek. "Yet the judge would tell you that you should have made inquiries. The fraud will not free you from the consequences of your act. I can see nothing for it but to lock her up on a charge of swindling. She personated Miss Mercedes Chabot and lived in my house as an impostor."

"At all events she will be out of the way, and unable to annoy me."

"Certainly, I, as a magistrate, will issue a warrant for her arrest and have it immediately executed."

"Let us send for a policeman and go and do it at once. I am so furious against the designing creature that I should feel a sort of savage pleasure in witnessing her dismay at her capture, and her cries for mercy would make agreeable music in my ears," answered Arthur.

Mr. Anglesey smiled, and, ringing the bell, despatched a servant for a constable.

His clerk speedily drew up a warrant, armed with which the policeman would be justified in taking her into custody.

Arthur volunteered to guide the party to the gipsies' camp, and on the constable's arrival they started for the woods.

The moon had risen and the night was bright and starlit.

"A nice thing for me it would be if this woman were to go up to London and represent herself as Lady Kimbolton," remarked Arthur as they walked along. "She could obtain goods in my name and cause me a great deal of annoyance. Your plan for confining her in prison is very sensible."

"I am sure of it," answered Mr. Anglesey. "Let us render her powerless for mischief and then consider what is best to be done."

"The best legal advice that the bar can afford shall be taken on the case. I am almost sure a judge would grant me a divorce if he knew how shamefully I have been swindled."

"You must have loved her to accept her representations so readily," observed his companion.

"I did. There is no denying that, and if you come to that part of the question I will own that there is much to like about her. She is amiable; her beauty is undeniable, her manner ladylike. She can play the guitar and sing divinely. If it were not for her gipsy birth, and her bad character and her poverty, she would not disgrace any man."

"It is very singular how greatly I was attracted to the girl, for she is but a girl after all," said Mr. Anglesey, musingly. "I never met any one I liked better."

"That is owing to her dangerous power of charming. She can ingratiate herself with any one and is sure to be popular wherever she goes."

"There is another of my dreams shattered. I hoped she would marry Ralph and make him a good wife. What poor, blind creatures we mortals are! I can compare man to nothing so much as a mole working everlastingly in the dark."

"If we could see the future," said Arthur, "how many of us would have the courage to face the distresses and disappointments, misery and disease, which threaten the majority?"

"True enough. This must be a probationary state of existence, and as the poet said 'man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards,'" answered Mr. Anglesey, with a deep-drawn sigh.

He was thinking of his own blighted life and the



misery of the last twenty years, when every time he saw his loved Marigold her mental malady affected him as much as if a sharp knife had cut through his heart.

They proceeded in silence, each occupied with his own thoughts, until they neared the gipsy encampment, the constable respectfully following behind them.

"What a strange influence women have over the lives of men," remarked Arthur, at length.

"You may well say that," answered Mr. Anglesey. "Look at my career. You know my story I suppose?"

"Yes. I have heard it from my father."

"If I had never seen Marigold how different would my life have been. It is ruin for a man to love the wrong woman, or one unworthy of him, and how few women are there who are worthy of a good, straightforward, honest man's love."

"You speak bitterly," said Arthur, "and yet I am inclined to agree with you, for am I not too a victim?"

"Poor Marigold," exclaimed Mr. Anglesey. "I have nothing to say against her; she is weak and foolish, and perhaps did wrong to love me, but we cannot control the heart."

"Take your own case," said Arthur. "Have you found Mrs. Anglesey all your youthful fancy painted her?"

"Frankly yes. I have loved her with a species of affection which amounted to idolatry. It is wrong to idolize anything, and Heaven has punished me. I have been blind to her faults if she had any, but very few men are capable of loving with the sustained and lasting love that I have always felt for Marigold."

"Is it wrong to worship one's wife?" asked Arthur, thoughtfully.

"Of course it is. Doesn't Byron put the case well when he says 'I never loved a young gazelle but when it came to know me well it was sure to die'? Love ought to be tempered with judgment."

"It is very fine to lay down the law in that manner," exclaimed Arthur, laughing. "But I fear there are very few men who allow reason to have anything to do with their love affairs. It seems to me that love is a species of delirium, a sort of brief madness. It was in my case. When I saw Carmen she bewitched me. I lost my senses, I went mad and could not rest till I had made her mine. One kiss of her lovely lips seemed worth a lifetime. One touch of her little hand was ecstasy, and when she smiled my heart bounded away from me and appeared to rest in her bosom."

"You are becoming quite eloquent," exclaimed Mr. Anglesey. "Do you regret your determination to punish her for the deception she practised upon you?"

"Upon my word you have divined my thoughts," answered the young man. "I don't know what has come over me. It is a foolish, soft, sentimental feeling, but I am inclined to let the poor creature go."

"Think of the mischief she may work you."

"So she might. I wish I had never found out all about her. Isn't she pretty? Has she not a winning way with her?"

"So had Delilah, and she betrayed Sampson into the hands of the Philistines."

"Women are enchantresses. There ought to be some law to prevent them from captivating us poor men and causing us to make idiots of ourselves," exclaimed Arthur.

"There are some women, my dear fellow," answered Mr. Anglesey, "who are more like venomous reptiles than anything else. Woe to the man who comes within the circle of their evil influence. Better would it be for such a one if he put a millstone round his neck and cast himself into the sea, as the Scripture says."

"I don't think there is anything of the snake about Carmen," replied Arthur. "She is not venomous as you elegantly term it. Her great fault is her artfulness, which combined with her poverty and low origin makes her objectionable. But all this is her misfortune rather than her fault. I don't mind the woman personally. It's only in the abstract that I dislike her."

"Let us turn back then," said Mr. Anglesey. "I have nothing to fear from her now. Let her go free if you like."

"No," replied Arthur, after a moment's hesitation. "Better for me if her power for evil be checked. She deserves punishment."

"You are a soft-hearted fellow, and don't know your own mind," said Mr. Anglesey. "If that woman had you alone for half an hour I'll make a heavy bet that she could talk you into anything."

"Very possibly," replied Arthur. "My great fault is my indolence, my want of firmness of character. Women always could do as they liked with me. I love the sex and am so easy-going. Who was it that said he wished all the pretty women in the world had but one mouth, and then he could kiss the concentrated loveliness of the globe?"

"Hush! I hear voices. We must steal upon the gipsies or our prisoner will escape," cried Mr. Anglesey, in a low and hurried tone, which effectually cut short the superficial chatter of the young Lord Kimbolton.

The gipsy camp at which they had arrived presented a picturesque though a sad and gloomy aspect.

Men and women were standing in groups outside their tents, discussing the events of the day and lamenting the death of Izard, who had always been a popular member of the tribe.

They recounted his exploits and honoured his memory by declaring that he was the most expert poacher and cleverest thief that had ever sold articles of kitchen use and robbed the house while the servant had gone to call her mistress, or killed pheasants in a cover at night time. No one could set a springs better than Izard for hare or rabbit. Few were his equal as a musician, and it was acknowledged on all hands that his death was an irreparable loss.

Marigold sat by herself on a mossy bank, revolving many things in her perturbed mind. Occasionally she bit her lips with vexation at the turn affairs had taken, and at times a smile would steal over her countenance as she thought of some ingenious design by means of which she could defeat her enemies and reinstate herself in the position she had so suddenly and unexpectedly lost.

"That is Carmen!" exclaimed Arthur, unguardedly, raising his voice.

She heard the well-known tones, and looked up in surprise.

"Officer," exclaimed Mr. Anglesey, "arrest your prisoner."

The constable, who was in uniform, stepped forward, and, putting his hand on Carmen's arm, cleverly slipped a pair of handcuffs over her wrists.

"What is the meaning of this outrage?" she asked, changing colour and becoming deathly white.

"I have a warrant for your arrest," replied the policeman.

"On what charge?"

"That of swindling. The charge will be read out to you at the station."

The men of the tribe congregated round the officer with threatening gestures. Many of them were armed with formidable bludgeons.

"Let her go," exclaimed Simeon. "What has she done to you?"

"She is my prisoner—be careful how you interfere with me," answered the constable.

"If you won't listen to reason," replied Simeon, "we must make you. What do you say, lads?"

There was a ready chorus of assent, and the attitude of the gipsies became menacing in the extreme. At this crisis Mr. Anglesey stepped forward attended by Arthur.

In his hand he held a six-chamber revolver, and, displaying it in the pale moonlight, he exclaimed:

"Back, you fellows—back, as you value your lives. The first man who interferes with or assaults the officer in the execution of his duty shall fall by my hand."

The gipsies, awed by this reinforcement and the sight of firearms, withdrew in a sullen manner.

Carmen sank upon the bank with an expression of mingled rage and terror on her pretty face.

"Have pity upon me!" she exclaimed to Arthur.

"I will go away—I will indeed. You shall not complain of my molesting you."

"We mean to take very good care that you do not have the chance," answered Arthur.

"You loved me once, and I am still your wife."

"Never allude to the infamous fact unless you want to madden me," retorted Arthur.

"Take her away," exclaimed Mr. Anglesey. "You lead, Arthur; I will bring up the rear and keep back those snarling curs."

The constable forced Carmen rudely to her feet.

She uttered a piercing shriek, which rang wildly through the air, startling the bats and other denizens of the silent wood.

"I will not go!" she screamed. "You shall not send me to prison! I will die first. Help, my friends, help!—help!"

## CHAPTER II.

And now a spectral form was seen  
Standing by the gipsy queen. Anon.

WHATEVER inclination the Zingari might have had to aid Carmen they did not dare to put it into operation.

The gleaming barrel of the outstretched pistol plainly intimated what the fate would be of the one who was rash enough to brave the anger of Mr. Anglesey.

"Not now," whispered Simeon. "We will follow them into the wood and attack them in the dark."

While Carmen was shrieking loudly as she was being rudely dragged across the glade the gipsy queen emerged from her tent accompanied by a female whose form looked spectral and unearthly in the dim light.

"Stop!" exclaimed Rachel Lee, loudly, as she waved her arm in an imperative and majestic manner.

"Who are you?" asked Mr. Anglesey, turning round.

"Stop, I command you," she repeated. "This night shall destiny be fulfilled."

Arthur and the constable released their hold of the fainting girl, who sank to the ground, and they regarded with a sort of awe the strange, weird being who spoke to them.

"I am the gipsy queen," continued Rachel Lee, "and by my side is your wife, Frank Anglesey. She has done well to seek me. I expected her, for the stars spoke to me last night, and I knew that the time had come."

No Pythonissa of old could have obtained stricter attention from her listeners than did the aged gipsy. Mr. Anglesey advanced, and, seeing his wife, said:

"You here, Marigold! I thought you were at home!"

"I came here to ask for news of my missing child. Did not Kimbolton tell me to consult Rachel Lee? and at last I have found her," replied Marigold.

"How can an old woman like this help you?" he asked. "You are a credulous dupe of an impostor."

"Silence, profane man," cried the gipsy queen, "and you, base hireling, release that girl. Dare you defy me?"

"My good woman," said Mr. Anglesey, "that girl is an artful and designing adventuress. We are going to punish her for her frauds."

"You will send her to prison!" exclaimed the gipsy, with a scornful laugh.

"Undoubtedly. Neither you nor all the members of your tribe shall baulk justice of its due."

"If you prosecute that girl you will condemn your own child," replied Rachel Lee, calmly.

"My child!" repeated Anglesey. "What mean you?"

He was thunderstruck at this revelation, and his pale, haggard, care-worn face lighted up with a glow to which it had been for long years a stranger.

"Is Carmen my child?" asked Marigold, who was trembling with agitation.

"She is. I have all the requisite proof. Embrace her, for she is your long-lost daughter."

Marigold sprang wildly forward, and in another moment she was kneeling on the green sward with Carmen's almost inanimate body clasped tenderly in her arms, while she murmured, in a voice which was choked with emotion and broken by sobs:

"My child—my child! my darling treasure! Blessed be Heaven for restoring you to me!"

Mr. Anglesey drew the gipsy on one side and said, in a stern tone:

"Is this a farce? Remember, I am not to be trifled with."

"I tell you, Frank Anglesey," answered Rachel Lee, "that Carmen is your own flesh and blood. She was stolen, first of all, by Lord Kimbolton, and placed with Hardy, the labourer, from whom we took her at his lordship's instigation."

"What proofs have you of this?"

"There are several men in the tribe still living who will vouch for the truth of my statement."

"When Marigold's child was stolen," said Mr. Anglesey, who was not yet convinced, "she had round her neck a gold coin set with brilliants, at the back of which were the initials, 'F. M.,' in blue enamel. Show me this, and I shall be satisfied."

The gipsy queen walked into her tent and presently emerged with the valuable ornament of which he had spoken.

"I can doubt no longer," he said. "Heaven has intervened in time to save me from ruining my own child."

Arthur Everton had approached during this conversation, and exclaimed:

"What is this I hear? Can it be true that Carmen is your child, and a lady by birth after all?"

"It is too strange not to be true," replied Mr. Anglesey. "This good woman has convinced me of the truth of her story. The revelation is a timely one; and you, my lord, should be as much rejoiced at it as—"

"She is my wife, and I have no objection to own her now," answered Arthur.

"You shall have a million of money, my lord, as soon as you acknowledge her as Lady Kimbolton," said Anglesey; "and she may settle it on you if she likes, for it will be hers to do as she likes with."

Half wild with joy, Arthur ran to Carmen's side, and, releasing her from her mother's embrace, said:

"Can you forgive me, Carmen?"

"Oh, yes, Arthur. Yes, I could forgive anything; but do not talk to me now, my brain is in a whirl. I can scarcely believe all this good news to be true."

Mr. Anglesey was the next to speak to her, and he exclaimed:



[EXODUS.]

"My dear child, my heart always acknowledged you. Pardon me for my harshness of a few minutes back. We have all been strangely mistaken."

"And I, father, have been to blame; but you must think of the temptations with which I was surrounded. Now I have kind friends, and Arthur has forgiven me, I shall be very different, and will never be deceitful again," she answered, with a sweet smile.

"Now," said Marigold, "is all my mourning over, and my sorrow turned to joy. I am mad no longer, and the rest of my life shall be devoted to securing the happiness of my husband and my daughter."

"It is a long lane that has no turning, mother," exclaimed Carmen. "I had an instinctive feeling all day that something would happen."

Turning to the gipsies, who stood in respectful silence, Mr. Anglesey said:

"My friends, strike your tents and come to my house. You shall pitch them in a field which I will give to you for ever, and no gipsies shall in future be removed from my ground. Money shall be given you to supply your wants, and you will have no excuse for robbing the hen-roost," he added, with a touch of dry humour.

"Hurrah!" cried Simeon. "Give a cheer for the squire, my lads. He is the poor gipsy's friend!"

"Hurrah! hurrah!" cried the gipsies, in chorus. The constable was lost in amazement at the extraordinary scene, which he did not clearly understand; but he took the handcuffs off Carmen's delicate wrists, knowing that somehow or other she was no longer his prisoner.

Quirino and Izard had been privately buried that day under an old oak tree, the gipsies preferring to keep the dreadful tragedy a secret.

There was nothing to detain them in the woods, and, hastily striking their tents, and putting their horses to the caravans, they determined to take advantage at once of Mr. Anglesey's generous offer.

As the ladies were tired they accepted a seat in one of the caravans, and, accompanied by old Rachel Lee, listened to the story of Carmen's infancy and early youth.

The gipsy queen had herself taught her to read and write, believing that she would one day be called to fill the high station to which she was born.

Her own inherent love of music enabled her to sing without any cultivation of the voice.

While Lord Kimbolton lived he continued to send Rachel presents of money, and her lips were sealed, but directly he died she felt that she was at liberty to speak, and had purposely revisited the neighbourhood of Clifton to seek an interview with the Angleseys, and reveal all she knew.

Mr. Anglesey and Arthur walked together, con-

versing in an animated manner respecting the occurrences of the day.

As the caravans had to make a *détour*, and go by a roundabout way, the gentlemen reached Mr. Anglesey's house first.

Arthur was quite willing now to own Carmen, and, having searched his heart, he felt that he really loved her.

All obstacles to his acknowledgment of her as his wife before the world were removed.

The daughter of Frank Anglesey, the wealthy Bristol merchant, was a very different person from Carmen, the obscure gipsy girl, who gained a precarious livelihood by singing in the public streets.

When Mr. Anglesey entered the house he was met by Ralph, who looked strangely flushed and excited.

"I have a favour to beg of you, sir," he exclaimed.

"Name it, my dear boy, and if it is anything in reason it is already granted," exclaimed Mr. Anglesey.

"My marriage with Carmen is of course broken off?"

"Considering that she is Lord Kimbolton's wife, I do not see how she can marry you."

"I may consider that settled?"

"Clearly so. But I must tell you one thing. Carmen turns out to be our long-lost child. She is Marigold's darling, about whom she has been fretting all these weary years."

"Indeed! I am glad to hear that, for your sake and her own. I never had any feeling against her except for one reason."

"And that was?"

"She stood between me and another. I loved before I saw her," exclaimed Ralph. "But I was willing to give up my darling to further the views of your self, my generous benefactor."

"You should have told me of this, Ralph," said Mr. Anglesey, gravely. "Have I not always deserved your confidence?"

"Always, sir. My only motive for concealment was a wish not to cause you pain. You had set your heart upon my marriage with the daughter of Mr. Marshall Chabot."

"True, but I would not have arranged the match had I known your affections were engaged elsewhere."

"It is very good of you to say so. All, however, is set straight now. May I introduce my darling to you?"

"Where is she?" asked Mr. Anglesey.

"In this house. Directly I knew that I was free I hurried away. The poor dear was breaking her little heart and I firmly believe would not have lived much longer. It is not far from Bristol to Bath

I went and brought her back with me. Fanny, dearest."

Fanny emerged from the drawing-room and advanced with downcast eyes to Mr. Anglesey.

"She is the daughter of—" began Ralph.

"My dear boy," interrupted Mr. Anglesey, "I do not want to know who she is. It is enough for me that you love the young lady, who seems in every way worthy of your choice. I am satisfied that you would not introduce me to any one to whom the slightest reproach could apply. May you be happy together."

Fanny's eyes closed at these words, she heaved a deep sigh, and fell back in a faint.

Quickly Ralph caught her in his arms and carried her to the drawing-room, where he laid her on a sofa.

Some eau-de-cologne and the fresh air soon revived her, and they sat side by side, like two loving doves, too happy for words.

When the gipsies arrived they were shown into the field Mr. Anglesey had promised them.

The larder was ransacked for good things, and the cellar supplied them with wine, spirits, and beer.

There was feasting that night among the Zingari, and their merry songs were heard far into the morning.

Carmen was greeted by Ralph and Fanny with a friendliness that showed they bore her no malice for the misery she had caused them.

Marigold appeared in an entirely new character. She made friends with every one and seemed so perfectly happy that Frank Anglesey thanked Heaven in his heart that at last peace and comfort had visited his home.

• • • • •  
We have little to add.

Fanny Proctor was married to Ralph with great pomp and ceremony.

Mr. Anglesey divided his wealth between Lord Kimbolton and Ralph; to the latter he gave his extensive business, retiring on a small income, and living a life of seclusion with his dear Marigold, who in the evening of life was all that he could wish for.

Arthur, Lord Kimbolton, introduced Carmen to London society, and took his seat in the House of Lords, where he became known as one of the most rising supporters of the Tory party.

A large portion of both Fanny's and Carmen's time was spent with Mr. Anglesey and Marigold, who loved them both dearly.

So the gloom passed away, and a sweet, serene sunshine spread its golden radiance over the lives of all our characters.

THE END.





[THE DEN OF WITCHCRAFT.]

## THE LILY OF CONNAUGHT.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Who will not mercie unto others show  
Low can he merrie ever hope to have?

Spenser.

"But how can we escape, my lady?" asked Theresa.

"I know not, 'tis all darkness before me. But it matters not. Heaven, that guides the mole and bat, will lead us by the hand."

"I have spoken to the forester, Black Martaugh, at the wicket," said the girl.

The princess turned away with a shudder, and Theresa went on:

"Since you came here he has lain at the gates a-nights like a dog—every live-long night. He has begged to see you, but he was refused. He says Lord Bruce is a friend to the Falcon Knight, and will help him all he can."

"Thank Heaven for that," said Eva, fervently. "We stand in need of friends."

During the day they examined their apartment and the corridor outside for a means of escape. The only window was barred, and high from the paved area of the court.

There was no chance by the way of the corridor, for at a short distance an iron-grated door barred the passage.

Eva O'Connor felt in her heart that the young warrior was foredoomed, that the trial was to be but an empty form, and that her father had determined to keep her at the convent until all was over in order to avoid the scene that would be caused by her appearance in the court.

Distracted by the thought that the young man would be given up to an ignominious death as a punishment for the presumption of his love, she saw the precious time pass and the day decline without discovering anything to give her hope.

Her despairing search for some means of escape was interrupted by a dull clanging of doors echoing along the vaulted corridors, and they retreated with trembling precipitation to her room.

Eva hastily seated herself at the casement, and, partially drawing the curtain aside, gazed out at the gorgeous sunset gilding the distant mountain tops, glittering on the lake, and giving a gloomy glory to the gray keep and ivied bawn of Castle Connor.

Although this was, in reality, an act of dissimulation on her part to mislead her jailers as to her feelings and intentions, yet so susceptible was her mind to mournful impressions that the solemn beauty of the scene before her seized upon her ima-

gination with sudden power, and memory dragged up the joyous days of the past and set them in chilling contrast with the unhappy present.

Hope and light and love were arrayed against doubt, darkness and despair.

With hysterical suddenness she burst into violent sobbing and a rain of tears, and Theresa knelt clinging to her and weeping for sympathy.

The opening door admitted the prioress, followed by a couple of sisters, bearing a light meal for the royal maiden. But the paroxysm of grief just started was not to be easily quelled, and Eva rejected the proffered food and repulsed all the kind advances of the venerable principal.

"Why mock me with food and seeming kindness," she cried, sobbing bitterly, "when you wring the life from out my heart? Why pretend to pity when your deeds are cruel, merciless?"

"My daughter, my princess—"

"If I am thy daughter save me from distraction. Am I thy princess? Then art thou my vassal. I command thee let me go forth. Let me go to free the hands of my kindred from murder, to save the life of the innocent."

These words were said in a loud tone of authority, and the rolling tears dried on the flushed cheeks and in the kindling eyes. But as she met the look of kindly pity on the calm face of the lady principal all her weakness returned, and she sank appealingly on the rushes at her feet, clinging to her sable gown, exclaiming:

"Oh, holy lady, pity! Do not look upon me as though I were distraught! It is my agony that speaks. Pardon a woman of earth that claims vassalage from a daughter of Heaven. But think, oh, mother, he is innocent, he must be saved."

"Rise, poor child," said the prioress, in an affectionate manner, raising the kneeling girl. "Thou art not thyself, this love has frenzied thee. Thou must not think of it, it is unsafe, unwise."

The princess drew back to look at the speaker through her tears.

"Unsafe! unwise!" she said, repeating the words in a meditative manner, and then, with one of her characteristic changes, she asked, abruptly, "How, reverend mother, can that be?"

"It is against the will of the king, thy father, and so against the will of Heaven."

"Where then is the vaunted wisdom of the Recluse Nun, to whom you bow your venerable head, whose learning is greater than that of the monastic clerks, who has soared the uttermost flights of human thought and fathomed the depths of nature?"

"My daughter! my daughter!" exclaimed the prioress, alarmed by the excited manner of the princess.

But Eva waved back the hands that would have clasped her and continued:

"Yes, these are the words she said—these very words—they are treasured in my inmost heart; she said: 'That every soul should be the mistress of its choice; that Heaven had planted love in human hearts, and man, for selfish ends, possessed no right to crush it; that—'"

"Hush, child, hush! I may not listen to thee."

"Away, thou! Leave me! I need no service from the lips belying hands and hearts. Begone, pitiless souls! I need you not!"

With an angry gesture of dismissal she turned her back upon the wondering group of nuns, and swept haughtily toward the window.

Theresa, with a cry of wonder and religious fear, rushed to her mistress and clung to her.

She had often seen these burstings forth of the passionate spirit before, but never in rebellion against parental and religious authority.

"Oh, mistress, mistress! Heaven preserve thee, mistress!" she cried, in frightened accents, as if she feared immediate vengeance would overtake the impassioned princess.

Eva O'Connor paused, impeded by the girl's caresses, and, taking her head between her hands, she looked into her frightened eyes with glittering glance and scornful smile.

"Thou sayest well, Theresa!" she said. "To Heaven, henceforth, shall be my supplications. I will no more of mortals who arrogate the power of Heaven, no more of sycophants who steal the cloaks of charity and love to hide their stony natures."

The prioress approached the impassioned maiden, and laying her hand gently upon her arm said, in the softest accents:

"Sweet princess, thou dost sorely wrong us. Thou knowest 'tis the king's wish. We have no choice. But thou art moved. We will leave thee to the kind attention of Sister Broda. Rest thee, daughter. We will go."

Then with another burst of the strange fitfulness of her nature the princess sank on the bedside and sobbed, wailingly:

"Oh, miserable creature, why should I care to live?" she cried. "A princess and a powerless prisoner—a daughter whose father drives her to despair—a sister to whose brothers every scandalous tale is truth—what do I with royalty that sinks me 'neath the scurf, or with affection that every breath can blight?"

All the endeavours of the venerable matron to console the agitated girl, or get her to listen to any reasoning but that of her own excited mind, were unavailing.

At the firmly repeated command of the princess,

and the respectful suggestion of Theresa, the princess and her companions withdrew, and the two captives were once more left alone.

The girl did not immediately try to interrupt her mistress's flow of grief, but sat with her head pressed upon her bosom until the last golden glimmer of sunset disappeared from the tips of the trees and the distant mountain crests, and the gray and purple shadows gave place to blue-black night with its twinkling stars—but still neither spoke.

It seemed as if the sufferer had sobbed herself into insensibility. She lay so quietly that Theresa thought she slept, and observed a death-like stillness, lest she should awaken her to the knowledge of woe.

Then the late moon rose slowly over the hills, casting her pale golden light over wood and lake and creeping through the black-looped curtains to light the white face and prestrate form of Eva O'Connor.

Then, and then only, did her faithful attendant discover that she slept not.

The splendid blue orbs were wide open and shone feverishly bright in the soft light. The face was deathly in its hue, the lips compressed, and, though no sound of laboured breathing reached the ear, the nostrils were dilated, and quivered nervelessly.

The sight of this wild, set face, with all its voiceless despair, had a more terrifying effect upon Theresa than the more lively expression of grief.

"Oh, my kind mistress—oh, Lady Eva!" she cried, "I thought you were sleeping. For the love of all the saints look not so woe-begone!"

Starting at the affectionate appeal, the princess roused herself, stood upon her feet and raised the girl, but in so frigid and statue-like a manner that the latter was frightened lest her senses had deserted her.

"Theresa," she said, with a cold quaver in her voice, "you are my only friend save Heaven. All others have forsaken me. I have thought upon my situation deeply. I must leave this place or die. Will you take the risk with me?"

"Oh, my princess, yes."

"Come, then, let's away."

"But how?"

"I know not—I have had revelations, but they are dim—dim!" said Eva, dreamily passing her hand across her forehead like one who struggles to recover a lost memory, or a dream. "I am an O'Connor. Shall I be the only weak one of my race? Shall I sit down to weep, whilst, for my sake, they slay that noble man? For 'tis his love of me that brings him to his strait. Come, come!"

"Oh, my princess, whither?"

"Forests and caves, churches and graves," murmured Eva, gazing with fixed eyes in the manner of a somnambulist out into the misty moonlight as if there she read the way to liberty.

Theresa followed the direction of her glittering eyes with a feeling of grief and terror, for she had now no doubt that the imaginative mind of her mistress had been unsettled by the horrors and troubles through which she had so lately passed.

Their view extended across the convent wall and out over an open piece of mead, made lustrous by the moon shining on the dewy grass. This space was bounded on the northern side by a thick bank of shrubbery, and upon their window, which looked toward the East, and upon the woods the moonlight fell equally.

To the south of this verdant platform stretched the darkness of the glen.

"Hail! See! They come!" exclaimed Eva, excitedly. "I knew Heaven could not forsake the faithful and brave of heart. Behold, Theresa, where the deliverers approach!"

There was a thrill of triumphant assurance in her voice, and her finger trembled not as she pointed toward the brink of the glen above which, at a short distance, appeared a dark form.

So strange was the manner of the princess and so simultaneous had been the challenge with the appearance that to her superstitious companion her words seemed like an incantation that called this figure from the bowels of the earth.

Neither spoke, for now the whole outline of a human form was visible above the ridge, first in a crouching position, now erect, waving its arms aloft, and, anon, flying stealthily across the opening toward the copse.

Then suddenly another figure, lighter in frame and quicker in action, sprang into sight on the same spot, and sped away in the dark tracks of the other. This latter bore a lance, and the spearhead glittered and flashed as he ran.

The heart of Eva beat more quickly as she watched the subtle figure and the long locks floating behind it, and she gave expression to her wild thoughts in broken exclamations, but gloom and silence settled on her as it disappeared into the northern wood, leaving the night scene as lifeless and soundless as before.

Soon, however, the ears of the princess and her attendant caught a musical sound, at first not louder

than the droning hum of the beetle, but increasing gradually until it came to them distinct, yet low, like a hunting-call from fairy land—a sound to ravish the ear of the waking and lull the sleeper to a deeper sleep.

Eva O'Connor rushed to the casement and gazed wildly around in search of the musician.

"'Tis he!" she cried, in a gasped whisper. "'Tis the hunting-call of Connacht Moran. Gracious powers! he has escaped!"

Even with the words she gave a cry of joy and clasped her hands in thankfulness, for, away on the edge of the copse, where the moonbeams fell full upon them, stood two men, the younger looking holding the spear in one hand, while with the other he stretched out a banneret, moving it slightly that the light might glisten on the device.

The distance was too great and the light too dim for the perfect scrutiny of form and face, and the features of the younger man, towards whom the heart of the fair prisoner stretched forth, were shadowed by the widespread pennon.

"'Tis he!" she cried. "Yonder is the falcon pennon. 'Tis Connacht Moran and the forester. They signal us. Let them be answered. Quick, Theresa; light the taper and set it on the sill that they may know we share their joy."

The girl hastened to obey, but she was so excited that her trembling hands were ill fitted for the use of flint and steel, and her impatient mistress caught the taper up and hastened to the curtains that hid the apartments of Sister Breda—she remembered the lights burning in the little oratory.

As her fingers touched the hangings she paused with a feeling of awe for the mysterious being whose sanctuary she was about to invade.

What if Breda had all the time been there—had overheard and watched them?

She drew the curtain very slightly and looked in with a cautiousness born of this last thought.

The apartment was empty, but the cresset was still burning in the recess beyond. The light shone upon the Madonna and the golden ornaments of the little shrine.

An open book lay on the quaint reading-desk, and on the white pages were the black beads and cross of a rosary.

Gilt brackets, containing wax candles, unlit, adorned the sides of the desk.

A kneeling cushion was on the floor before it and a rich drapery of crimson fell from ceiling to floor behind all.

Eva O'Connor was struck with wonder at this display of wealth and ornament so much out of keeping with the austerity of convent life, and this wonder increased when she considered that this display was in the cell of a recluse. But the name of the royal captive Dervorgal, upon whose story Sister Breda had made such singular comment, rushed to her memory, and the explanation was found.

These unusual ornaments had been permitted as a shadow of state to the erring queen, and Eva felt a chill to think that she too of royal blood should be imprisoned in this abode of guilt by her own kin.

One thing more astonished her in looking around the room and recess.

How had the mysterious Sister Breda left the apartment?

There was no door or window on any side save the one at which Eva O'Connor stood.

Yet the nun was not there.

While filled with this new wonder the hunting-call sounded faintly without, and the princess, forgetting all else, took one step toward the cresset to light the taper she bore, when a rustling sound beyond caused her to retreat hastily behind the curtains.

Hardly had she gained the refuge and let the heavy cloth fall behind her when she heard hurried footsteps crushing the rushes that strewed the floor within.

A terror seized her. She had no time to look at the approaching person.

"Haste, Theresa!" she cried, in a breathed whisper, throwing the unlit taper on the matting and seizing her trembling companion. "Haste—that horrid woman comes. We must pretend to sleep."

Noislessly they threw themselves, locked in each other's arms, upon the bed, and lay rigidly still with closed eyes.

The next instant the curtains parted, and the dreaded Sister Breda appeared with a small hand lamp, and approached the bed.

A portion of Theresa's long black tresses had fallen across the face of the princess, and, through these she ventured to steal a glance at the object of her fear.

The lamp which the sister carried, casting its light upward, gave a skeleton-like aspect to the pale face, sinking the eye sockets into deep gloom, in which the feverish orbs glittered balefully, while the shadows caused by the flickering of the flame made the mouth appear to work convulsively.

"They sleep," she said, in a hollow, chuckling manner. "They sleep, both of them—princess and servant. Ha-a-a! the griefs of young hearts sit lightly. A surface wound is readily healed. 'Tis the woe of years that eats into the soul—into the very core."

She stooped, and with light hand removed the girl's tresses from the tear-stained cheek of the princess.

"She has wept," she said. "She is weeping now—even in sleep. Poor things! Poor things!"

With a thrill of hope at the tone of commiseration in which these words were uttered Eva was about to open her eyes and address the speaker, but she was prevented by the strange being breaking once more into her low, pitiless laugh.

"Tears, royal tears, she said. They are balm to me—brighter and sweeter than the amber tears of the trees of Abalae. Ha-a-a! Pomp of royalty, what art thou when the head of the highest seeks a shelter on the bosom of the lowest, and the tears of princess and peasant wet the same pillow? Poor, empty vanity. Hate works thy bane, grief lowers thy pride, and death annihilates thee! Grief! Hate! Death!"

This fierce soliloquy was broken by the hunting-call sounding from without, clearer and apparently nearer than before.

Both the captives started at the sound, but their action was unnoticed by the nun in her own surprised movement toward the window.

"What may this mean?" she muttered, in an amazed tone, looking on the sill to gaze out, with the lamp still in her hand. "It cannot be that any hunt so late, or is there truth in legendary tales?"

Scarcely had the words passed her lips when she started back from a hissing sound like that caused by the passage of a swift bird through the air; there was a ringing thud, and the girl, sitting upright in the bed, saw the white shaft of an arrow quivering in the light, with the head buried in the oaken casement by the sister's side, and a slip of parchment fluttering from it.

"Holy Mother, thou art merciful!" ejaculated the nun, shrinking back from the window. "What murderous caltrops are these that be abroad?"

At this she saw the parchment slip, and rushing forward seized it with a cry, at the same time turning her eyes toward the bed on which Eva and Theresa had sunk with the quick instinct of fear.

It would be a wrong to Eva O'Connor to say that fear altogether dictated this movement—there was prudence in it.

She expected no pity from this singular woman, and chose not to cast a chance away.

"They have not been disturbed," said Sister Breda. "This is a message for the royal one. Her vassals are more wakeful over her woes than she."

But on holding the strangely arrived missive to the lamp she uttered a cry of anger so savage, though suppressed in sound, that the fair listeners shrank shudderingly together.

"What?" hissed the nun, with closed teeth and quivering nostrils, as she shook her clenched hand containing the crushed parchment toward the window. "Ye have found the secret, have ye? Ye will meet them in chapel! By Our Lady! By the soul of Breda I ye shall see, rather than that," she cried, savagely seizing a heavy metal crucifix that hung from her girdle, and turning toward the couch where the two girls lay trembling. "Rather than that I'd leave her corpse that they might chapel it. But let her live to sorrow. Away to foil those idiots—idiots."

The repeated word died away as the fierce being rushed between the curtains and over the rushes beyond. And now the fear that had kept the princess silent in her presence was dispersed by the more terrible fear that the errand of this wild woman would be the death of all her lately awakened hope of liberty.

In a single instant she was on her feet and at the aperture of the scarcely closed curtains.

With a barely repressed cry of wonder and a feeling of superstitious fear she saw that the devotional array in the recess, crimson hangings, statue, candelabra, desk and all were removed from their place to one side, disclosing a low, dark door beyond.

As quickly as a flying storm-cloud the black-robed form of Breda rushed through the low door, and the desecrated altar rolled back to its place like a pageant in a theatre.

"Gracious Mother," ejaculated the princess. "Can such things be in thy holy habitation?"

"Alas, she is crazed, the evil one possesses her," whispered Theresa, her teeth chattering with affright.

The distant stroke of the castle bell told them of the rapid advance of the night and the necessity of making the most of the few hours left till daylight. The princess hastened back to the casement, and taking off a scarf waved it toward the copse where the signallers had appeared. There was no answer, no sign of life.



"Alas!" she sighed, "they have seen her take the message, and are gone."

Of that message she knew no more than that their proffered deliverers wished them to meet them in the chapel.

They knew not even the direction in which the chapel lay, or any means of communication therewith, for the delicious illness of Eva since their arrival at the convent had hindered the attendance of either at the regular services.

"Come, Theresa," said Eva, resolutely. "We will seek for this friendly trysting-place. Death threatens any way. This be our weapon."

She wrenched the arrow from the casement, and directed Theresa to secure the flint and taper, but, changing from her first thought, she entered Breda's room and lit it at the cresset.

## CHAPTER XV.

My fate cries out,  
And makes each petty artery in this body  
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.

Shakespeare.

"THIS way!" she cried. "We will arouse these holy women, and let them know the snake that nestles with them. We will show them this sorceress—this servant of Sathanas in her den!"

Followed by Theresa, she rushed towards the door that opened into the corridor, and tried the latch. The metal clicked, but the door moved not. It was fastened on the outside.

"What!" she cried, "has this smooth-tongued principal dared to lock me—Eva O'Connor—in such a narrow space, with a wolfish maniac—a murderer?"

Then, in the agony of mingled fright and anger, they beat upon the oaken door and cried aloud for help and freedom.

There came no answer. Their strokes produced only a whispering echo from the stony corridor without, and their voices were not heard beyond their own room.

Vainly they listened for the clanging of the iron grating that cut off this wing from the rest of the convent.

They had discovered the existence of this partition in their search of the early evening.

Why did such a division exist was the question which now arose in the apprehensive mind of Eva O'Connor. Why was she, the daughter of a king, and whilom the pride of a nation, separated from her sex and race and left to the mercy of a being scarcely human?

In answer to these questions other thoughts sprang instantly—too instantly for word expression.

The imputed sanctity and humility of Sister Breda—her really impious and savage nature—her hatred of royalty and her mutterings of revenge—all uprose in the mind of Eva; and into the power of this fearful being, at once the outcast and the evil genius of the race, she had been given—to her representations was due the seeming cruelty of her kin.

"Great Heavens!" cried the unhappy Eva, as this thought struck her. "What may not these representations be? What crimes may she not set down unto my charge to wring my father's heart through his love toward me?"

"What crimes? What representations?" exclaimed Theresa.

"She will say that I am mad!" cried the princess, with frenzied sobbing. "She has already said it. She will say that in my ravings I've confessed to—Oh, Theresa, the thought is odious!"

"She dare not say it, my princess!" cried the girl, angrily, as her mistress dropped her wild face upon her shoulder. "They would kill her—I myself would kill her if she did. No one would believe her."

"Yes, child, they will. She has deceived the world. Her fame is great. Her holy garb protects her!"

"But they will also hear you."

"Never, never! I am in her power. She will drive me really mad ere this. She will persuade them that to hide the memory of my shame I must be buried from the world. Did you not hear her? She said that she but let me live to sorrow. Oh, deep-laid villainy! But I will not sink beneath it. I will escape from this. She is the murderess of Conrad. Why should Moran be forced to fly for her crime? I will tear the veil of sanctity from her hypocrisy!"

With the wild excitement these thoughts had worked up she dashed between the curtains and toward the little altar at the end of the chamber. But as she was about to take precipitate hold of the hangings her eyes fell upon the benign face of the Madonna, and she knelt with a short prayer for forgiveness for the irreverent action to which her perious situation forced her.

Theresa also knelt, too much awed to speak, and crossed herself devoutly.

As they arose Eva observed a white object on the rushes near the hangings. She lifted it and found

that it was the crumpled parchment. Holding it to the light, she read the following words, scrawled in an odd, heavy hand that was utterly unknown to her:

"NOBLE PRINCESS.—Loving and loyal friends, bearing hearts to help thee, have found means to penetrate to the vaults beneath the chapel in the place of thy imprisonment. Prudence and the pious regard they bear the House of Our Lady forbid their farther trespass. Haste to meet them there, and fly to him to whom thy presence is life."

A strange tumult of conflicting emotions seized upon the princess on reading these words—joy at the prospect of liberty, fear of its hindrance by the opposition of the malignant Breda, and doubt of the safety of Moran.

For why was not this missive written in his hand? Why did it not bear his name or seal? And what was the meaning of the last phrase? Was it merely an expression of love, or did it mean that he was still in bonds and that her presence and pleading were needed for his safety?

"No," she cried, answering her own questioning thoughts, and with a true lover's answer, "no! No selfish fear of his seeks for my safety. He is free, free, Theresa. He could not fly and leave me here in grief. Fearing mishap, his writing is disguised. Noble heart, brave and true. I will keep the tryst."

She had put her hand to the framework which the crimson hangings covered, and giving it a gentle push it rolled away as it had done before, revealing the low, dark portal beyond.

The door was closed. With a feeling of trepidation Eva put her hand to the massive latch, drew one long breath and pushed it open.

A damp, chill gust of air rushed with a sigh from the darkness before them, flickering and extinguishing their light, and they stood in doubt upon the threshold of the tomb-like place.

A feeling of fear came over Eva at the sight of the cold darkness before her, and she stood in doubt whether to dare the unknown passage or to return and submit in quiet to her imprisonment. Her hesitation was but for an instant, however, for one thought of Moran decided her.

If he had escaped, as she felt certain he had, and had seen Breda snatch the missive from the arrow shaft and shake it aloft, he had taken that action as an affirmative reply to his request, and would await her coming, be it ever so long.

She shuddered to think of the danger he ran by remaining even for a moment in close proximity to Castle Connor, for she knew that the rage of the king would be redoubled, and the suspicions already entertained towards him confirmed by the act of breaking prison and flying from investigation.

No, she would seek him, bid him good-bye, and urge his instant flight to some place of safety until the revengeful feelings of her kin were softened, and time, the corrector, should establish his innocence of the dreadful crime, at present so clouded in mystery.

So, relighting the candle, she took Theresa's hand, which trembled in her clasp, and with slow steps entered the dark passage.

It was very narrow, and the sides were of rugged masonry with projecting knobs and ridges of mortar, as if it was a rough space left in the thickness of a wall.

A sort of sand or grimy dust covered the floor and hindered their footfalls from awaking the echoes, which were evidently sensitive, as the rustle of their garments against the projections sounded in a hissing whisper.

They had not replaced the strange mask of the entrance, for the light of the cresset was an encouragement to them, and they were too timid to thus cut themselves off from such safety as their chamber afforded them.

But soon this light died in a glimmer behind them, and the radiance of the little taper shrivelled up to a dull, yellow disc on the thickening atmosphere before.

Going carefully and pausing often, they arrived at a rugged flight of steps, down which they might have fallen but that their feeble light showed them the slanting of the ceiling before them.

The courage of the princess wavered as she endeavoured to penetrate the blackness of this abyss. It was so repulsive and chilling, so like leaving the world and descending into the grave, that she half turned to retrace her steps, when the girl, still more timorous than herself, said, in a tone half rejoicing, half entreating:

"Oh, do, do, my lady; for the love of goodness let us return!"

Strange that this very endorsement of her own fears made the princess ashamed of them, and she renewed herself and took the first step down the dark stairs.

Thus, pausing on every step and trembling at the sound of each other's breathing, they reached the bottom of the flight and found themselves in a pas-

sage wider than that above, but damper and more chilly, with a vaulty small that was very oppressive and filled the minds of the adventurous maidens with all sorts of ghastly imaginings.

But with these came the more assuring thought that they were surely near the chapel vaults, where friends would be awaiting them, and now, with vague fears of danger behind them, they hurried more rapidly onward until they were stopped by a closed door.

As they paused in doubt before it a great clang reverberated through the passage from the direction whence they came, as if a heavy door had been closed behind them, and in great affright they threw themselves against the barrier before them in the hope of being able to break away to liberty.

The door flew open before their united weight, and they were nearly precipitated to the floor beyond by its sudden yielding.

The scene that met their eyes on recovering their balance was not calculated to calm their fears or increase their hopes.

The place they had entered was a small cave or cell, with a jagged and arched roof, as if it were a mere hole roughly hewn out of the heart of the solid rock.

A rude chair and table stood at one side. On the table, which seemed to creak beneath their weight, were piled several ancient volumes of massive size with thick wooden covers and heavy metal clasps.

Several more dusty tomes lay upon the floor or leaned against the walls.

A small furnace, beside which was a pile of fagots and peat, accounted for the smoke-blackened ceiling and walls, on which the black soot seemed to hang in globules.

Around the furnace were scattered crucibles and other chemical apparatus.

A portion of the rocky wall smoother than the rest was marked with characters incomprehensible to the princess.

But what thrilled her most was to note, on looking more closely at the table, a time-stained manuscript, covered with cabalistic characters, unrolled and held flat by a skull laid upon one edge and the bone of a human forearm on the other, while beside it lay a black mask with glass eyelids, such as chemists use when employed with poisonous or explosive substances.

"Come, let's away," she said, retreating with a shudder. "It is the den of witchcraft. The sorceress may come!"

Then as they fled back into the passage Eva thought that they were closed in this place and must perish in darkness, and they rushed wildly back to the foot of the stairs.

It was as she feared. A door which had been open and unnoticed when they passed now barred their retreat, and revealed another passage at right angles to the one they were in, which it had before hidden.

"The Recluse has returned," whispered Eva; "she will find the door opened above; she will miss us and seek us here; I fear her more than all beside. Let us explore this passage."

(To be continued.)

## THE MARRIAGE OF THE EMPEROR OF CHINA.—

Writing from Shanghai on August 17th, a correspondent of a contemporary says: "The preparations for the Emperor's marriage are being pressed forward; money and silk are being sent up for use in the ceremonies, jewellery is brought up for the mandarins, and schemes are discussed for adding lustre to the spectacle, which, unless it be marred by some coup d'état and consequent civil war, is to inaugurate a new era of magnificence and prosperity. The contingency of a conspiracy and outbreak is not, indeed, impossible, for there are two parties at the capital—the one representing the old Chinese, the other the ruling race; but it does not seem probable, the country generally being prosperous and flourishing, and the popular party therefore ill-disposed to assert itself. While the death of Tsenghuofan deprives it of the leader it has for years been accustomed to look up to it is true that Li is master of the position; but his rivalry with Tseng has for years thrown him into the arms of the ruling dynasty, and the country is scarcely prepared to see him come forward as the representative of the patriotic feeling of the original natives of the land. Nor do the Tartars yet feel strong enough to do without him, and so drive him into arms against them. There are, however, from time to time, reports and rumours which betray an uneasy feeling in the central provinces of Hunan, Hupeh, and Hquan; and should the crops there fail, the people, the descendants of the old dominant race, who have been taught their strength by the armies employed in the suppression of the Taping and Nien-fai rebellions being drawn entirely from them, might rise, and, strengthened by the number of disbanded troops who have been in the last year sent to their homes, sweep in a resistless tide over the surround-

ing provinces. The fate of China therefore greatly depends on the sun and rain of the next two months, and as everything at present points to a prosperous harvest the crisis will probably pass over peacefully."

## WARNED BY THE PLANETS.

### CHAPTER XLVII.

LADY MARGUERITE awoke to consciousness in the dim twilight of a pleasant little chamber, a sweet, fresh breeze blowing through the open window, and cooling her fevered cheeks, and a soft hand smoothing back her hair with soothing, dainty touches.

Her temples throbbed painfully, and she felt very weak and languid after her dreadful fright, and the dainty touches were so soothing that she closed her eyes again and lay for several moments in half-unconscious enjoyment.

But curiosity began to assert itself, and she opened them again; and this time she saw the face of a young girl bending over her—a rare and lovely face as fair and pure as a pearl.

She smiled involuntarily, and the pretty, rosy lips above her smiled back in response.

"Papa," called a voice as sweet as the note of a thrush, "she's awake. Come in, please!"

And the next instant the pearl-fair face vanished, and a rough, bearded one looked down in its place.

Lady Marguerite struggled up to a sitting posture, but the effort made her faint and dizzy.

"Where am I?" she asked, gazing about her with bewildered eyes.

The young maiden with the pearl face advanced to her side.

"You are at my aunt's, Mrs. Keith's, and this is Doctor Renfrew, who lives just below Strathspey Castle, and I am Maggie, his daughter," she said, sweetly.

"And you had a pretty rough shaking last night," put in the old doctor, "so lie down and keep quiet—Maggie will bring you some breakfast presently."

The terrible dangers of the past night came back with awful distinctness to Lady Marguerite's memory.

"And the countess," she asked, growing pale, "what of her?"

"Nothing, only she's half dead from the fright, and she's got a little twist in her ankle—nothing serious," replied the doctor.

"The gentleman, Sir Bayard Broughton?" added Maggie, considerably.

"Is bruised very badly," finished the doctor as he walked away.

Marguerite lay back upon her pillows with a sigh of relief.

They had passed through the awful danger comparatively unhurt.

Presently she asked another question.

"Who found us? How did we get here?"

"Captain Forsythe found you," replied Maggie; "he saw you at the old castle, I think, and, seeing that a storm was coming, hurried after you to bring you here till it was over. But you had left the cave when he reached it, and he did not come up with you till after the horses had run down the gorge. He found the carriage smashed, and Sir Bayard standing in despair over the countess and yourself, believing you both to be dead. But the captain knew better, so he got help and brought you here. Now," she added, smiling brightly, "you know everything, and you must lie quite still while I run down to the kitchen and fetch your breakfast."

Lady Marguerite obeyed, and in ten minutes Maggie was back again with a tempting little meal on an old-fashioned silver tray, and with it a small bunch of roses and violets.

"Captain Forsythe sent these," she said as she put the flowers in Pearl's hands, "with his compliments, and he would like to come in and inquire how you are, but papa won't let him. Papa's awful cross about his patients."

Lady Marguerite did not answer, she averted her face to hide the burning flush that suffused it.

"When did the captain come?" she asked, after a pause.

"Captain Forsythe? Oh, he boards here, you know. Aunt Keith always takes boarders in summer, and the captain's been here a week or two. He's on a sketching tour, and he draws beautifully. Come now, let me assist you to rise—there, the pillow will support you, and you can eat your breakfast nicely while I run in and speak to the countess."

"Tell her I'm very glad she's not seriously injured," said Marguerite; "and—and—you may," she stammered, her cheeks glowing like peonies—"you may say to Captain Forsythe that I am very much obliged to him for the flowers."

"Very well!" and away went Maggie, trilling a little Highland melody.

And Lady Marguerite trifled with her tempting breakfast for a minute or two and then lay down, burying her face amid her pillows with a sharp, aching pain at her heart.

That afternoon the earl, who had returned from Lancashire, drove over with Lady Neville and Judith, Lady Marguerite's maid; and for the first time in half a score of years he met with Doctor Renfrew.

The old Scotchman stood stubbornly, his keen gray eyes looking straight before him as the peer advanced, determined if any salutation took place between them that he would not be the first to speak.

The earl did not hesitate, however, he came up with extended hand.

"How are you, doctor?" he said, a wan smile lighting his worn, white face. "You and I parted a little at odds if I remember rightly. Are you friendly enough to forget and forgive?"

"I am friendly enough to forgive you," replied the doctor, "but forgetting is another thing. I can't do that, Lord Strathspey."

The earl winced and hesitated an instant before he spoke again.

"No, you can't forget," he said, at last, an unutterable despair in his voice and face, "and I won't ask it. But, doctor," he added, with a sudden passion, "you were my best and earliest friend, and I don't like you to think me an unprincipled villain. Doctor, in all the wide earth there is no being so utterly lost and miserable as I am."

The old man put out his hand and clasped the earl's in a hearty grasp.

"My poor Angus," he said, "I knew it would come to this, and now it is too late."

"Too late," echoed the earl, "too late. She's dead. I stood by her grave yesterday. She lies in the common potter's field on Lancaster Moor."

There was a something inexpressibly thrilling in the earl's utter despair. The doctor drew his hand across his eyes.

"She loved you so, Angus," he said. "Poor thing, I shall never forget her last words to me, 'Tell my husband that I love him, and forgive him.'"

"Don't!" cried the earl, putting his hand to his heart, "I cannot bear it! Great Heaven, doctor, remorse is a terrible thing! I wish I could die! If it were not such a cowardly thing to do I'd soon end all this!"

"You will do better to live, and clear your wife's slandered name; you are not ready to close your accounts yet."

"True enough. But I cannot banish her face for one instant—sleeping or waking it is before my eyes; her white, hopeless face looking through the bars of a madhouse. I shall go mad myself soon! But that was not my work, doctor."

"What, consigning your wife to a madhouse?"

"Yes. Sir Marshall Neville and his wife did it without my knowledge, while I was abroad."

"But you didn't try to undo it while there was time," said the doctor, mercilessly.

"No; because I doubted her fidelity."

"And what has changed your mind, Lord Strathspey?"

The old man's wrath was rising again, but the earl did not resent it. He answered, meekly:

"I cannot tell. I do not believe the young man who bears my name is my son, for one thing."

"It's a marvel to me that you did not find that out long ago," returned the doctor. "A mother's instincts are always true. The boy in the Tyrol was yours, and your wife knew it; but, womanlike, she loved you so tenderly that she kept all her hopes and fears to herself, and tried to get at the bottom of the mystery before she disturbed your mind."

"That's where the trouble began. If she had only trusted me at first, and had no secrets from me. I thought the child was hers—born before our marriage."

The doctor uttered an exclamation of disgust.

"Just like a jealous idiot!" he exclaimed. "Couldn't the child's age determine that?"

"I took no thought of its age," replied the earl, humbly.

"No, you didn't," stormed the old man, "you just jumped at conclusions to suit your jealous fancy. You should have gone to a madhouse—not your poor wife, the truest and fondest wife in England."

The earl stood silent in the summer twilight, his face ghastly in the gloom.

"Yes," he said, slowly, at last, his voice broken and unnatural, "I believe it all now, and I would give my soul's eternal welfare to recall the past—but it is too late, too late!"

### CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE Countess of Mortlake took an amazing fancy to Doctor Renfrew at first sight, and whatever the countess fancied she appropriated at once.

So it turned out that after her twisted ankle was straightened, and she was able to stomp about again by the aid of her jewelled stick through the great

chambers at Ravenswold, she felt no inclination to give up her physician.

She had her aches and ailments, as women of her age will have, dowager countesses though they be, and she found it convenient and comfortable to have the sage old doctor at her elbow.

So she made him a proposition, engaging his medical services until her return to London, and for the sake of the golden guineas that formed part of the compact the doctor assented, and every day, rain or shine, found him on duty at Ravenswold.

Thereby Lady Marguerite and Maggie grew to be great friends, and formed for each other a very fond attachment after the fashion of young ladies; and Maggie carried to Marguerite an endless number of bouquets and three-cornered billets, which Captain Forsythe always took excessive pleasure in delivering.

Matters stood at this odd one Sunday afternoon late in August.

The doctor was on duty at Ravenswold, as it chanced that day that the countess and Lady Neville both had need of him.

The earl was absent and Sir Bayard Broughton had taken flight to London, for a short stay, on some very urgent business; and Lady Marguerite was making a visit to Maggie Renfrew at Mrs. Keith's.

The two girls were sitting on the long terrace of the pleasant old country house, chatting very confidentially over their needlework when, Forsythe drove up in a handsome carriage, with just the daintiest pair of cream-coloured ponies that ever eyes beheld.

He had come, he averred, approaching the pair of maidens with his winning smile and knightly bearing, to take them for a drive far down amid the green Highland valleys; something that would surpass the London Park and the Lady's Mile infinitely.

Maggie's brown eyes twinkled like twin stars as she listened.

"I haven't the least doubt of it, Captain Forsythe," she replied; "but tell the truth, and say you came to take Lady Marguerite! Confess you've been to Ravenswold, and, not finding her there, you are here—three, you know, are always one to many, captain!"

He smiled very good-humouredly, but he protested loudly against the accusation.

But Maggie refused to believe him.

"Even if it were so," she added, with bewitching gaiety, "I should be forced to decline your invitation, for Aunt Keith has gone to Perth, and I'm housekeeper, and must make quene-cake for tea—thank you all the same, Captain Forsythe."

With mocking laughter she ran away for Lady Marguerite's shawl and hat, and actually forced her to put them on and accompany the captain.

"It will be a match yet," she mused, standing on the terrace, and looking after the pretty turn-out, from which Lady Pearl's happy, blushing face smiled back, "if only that bugbear of a baronet could be got out of the way. Poor Lady Marguerite, she'll get a fine lecture for this from her royal ladies, but how happy she looks! I wish she were like me, and had courage to rebel. I'd like to see any one marry me to a man I did not fancy!"

As the high-stepping ponies turned into the green lane and disappeared away danced light-hearted Maggie, trilling a merry song.

First she went to look after her quene-cake—that arranged, and left in the hands of the brawny Scotch cook, she went dancing through the breezy halls, and up to her own chamber.

It was a large, pleasant room, opening into a kind of balcony that ran the entire length of the house, and commanded a fine view of the surrounding country.

Maggie seated herself at the window, with a book in her hand, but she was in no mood for reading. Her thoughts were full of Lady Marguerite and her approaching marriage with the baronet. With her eyes on the distant Highlands she sat and pondered.

"It must be dreadful to be an earl's daughter," she thought, "forced to marry some titled man, no matter whether one likes him or not! Dear me, how much sooner I would be poor and humble! Poor Lady Marguerite, I do pity her so! She's so sweet and good and gentle! I wish I could help her! I wonder what she would say," with an amused laugh, "if she knew about that insolent brother of hers—what an offer of marriage he made me. But maybe she knows he's not her brother—I don't think she likes him; but she's so mild and good she never expresses her feelings. I wonder where the noble young peer can be! I trust he'll not come to Ravenswold. Dear me," she cried, presently, as a key in the lock of a trunk near at hand chanced to catch her eye, "how careless I am! I forgot to take out that key when I got out the money for papa this morning."

She arose and, approaching the trunk, knelt down beside it.

"The idea of taking these things everywhere we



go," she went on, "and I always feel uneasy about them. Poor Lady Strathspey's jewels, and to think that Lady Marguerite must not know! It seems so wonderful! I wonder what papa ever will do with them! Give them to Lord Strathspey, I suppose, now that the poor countess is dead. The Tyrol boy will never be found now, though Judith thinks he will. Poor Lady Strathspey! I can just remember her sweet face!"

She sighed, and half unconsciously raised one of the caskets from the depths of the trunk.

They were carefully packed; wherever the old doctor went he took them with him, lest some harm should befall them in his absence.

Maggie took out the quaint old casket and opened it, obeying a momentary impulse.

It was filled with diamonds and pearls, very fine and costly gems, that had belonged to Lady Strathspey's mother.

She ran them through her fingers, watching the glancing reflections when the sunlight touched them; then she put them away, and took up a small bundle.

"The poor little baby's clothes," she mused, "that it wore when they found it under the milch-goat! I wonder if it really was Lord Strathspey's son. Why, bless me, the cloak is getting damp and mouldy, and the hood too! I must hang them in the sunshine; but I don't suppose they'll ever be of any use now—no one will care for them now that poor Lady Strathspey's dead."

She shook out the little garments and hung them one by one upon the window-sill, where the afternoon sunlight fell.

The quilted satin lining of the cloak was tarnished by the dampness, and she took up a towel and assayed to brush it off. In so doing a kind of rustling sound struck her attention.

"What's that I wonder?" she thought as she examined the garment more closely.

Something rustled beneath her fingers, between the quilted lining and the flannel, something hard, like paper.

Another person might never have noticed it, but Maggie was very observant and very determined.

"I must solve that mystery," she said, going to her work-basket for her scissors. "I wonder if the cloak's lined with Bank of England notes."

She sat down by the window, with the little cloak on her knee—the cloak, faded by so many years, that had wrapt the little Alpine babe when the old shepherd found him on the summit of the bald cliff, suckled by the pitying milch-goat.

She inserted the point of her scissors in the seam, and ripped the lining loose, and sure enough inside was a paper.

Maggie drew it out with trembling fingers—a yellow sheet of paper closely written over. What mystery was she about to solve? For a moment the time-worn letter awoke before her eyes, and then she read:

"This paper is to show that this child is the son of the Earl of Strathspey. It was stolen from him only an hour or two after its birth by a woman who was hired to steal it by Lady Cecilia Drummond. She gave it to me a week or two after it was stolen and told me to throw it in the Thames. I promised that I would, for Lady Drummond had me in her power and I was bound to obey, and I meant to do what I said when I took the child. But it's no easy thing to murder a baby. I've done bad things in my day, but I couldn't do that, my heart failed me. My father and mother lived in the Tyrol and I made up my mind to take the child to them. I crossed the Channel with it and the little thing lived, and that through what would have killed any other baby. But when I got to the old place I couldn't face the old folks. I was an innocent lad when I left them, and now—well, no matter. I shall put the child near to the cottage, where I know they'll find him, and in after years if any one wants to know his name he is Lord Strathspey's son."

Maggie read the cramped, badly written lines through twice before their full meaning dawned upon her. When she fully understood their import she sprang to her feet with an exclamation of delight and astonishment, and turning with the all-important paper fluttering between her fingers she beheld the young heir, Lord Angus, of Strathspey Castle, confronting her from the terrace beyond the open window.

(To be continued.)

DESCRIPTION OF THE MIKADO.—As the Mikado is coming to England to look for a wife, if report (which is always truthful) is not wrong this time, it is as well to give a description of His Majesty. The young emperor is tall for an Asiatic, about 5ft. 10in. high, of dignified bearing, slightly built, of darker complexion than the majority of higher-class Japanese, with a thin, composed face, somewhat Mongolian in cast, full lips, and dark eyes, which regard attentively the

objects which attract their gaze. His Majesty was, when interviewed on his passing through Yokohama, richly and not untastefully attired, carrying himself—save a slight rigidity in his gait, as if unused to boots—well in his European habiliments, which consisted of a full-dress coat, lined with purple silk, of diplomatic cut, buttoned to the throat, embroidered in gold from waist to throat with fancy designs, as also was the Prussian collar, which was continued in a semi-circle to between the shoulder-blades, like a gorgeous tippet or victorine; the cuffs and pocket flaps being similarly adorned, and a broad gold stripe running down the trousers. A dress sword, with gold-mounted scabbard and hilt, and a cocked hat of English naval shape, with gold binding, and a gold cockade on either side, something like a flying bird of the kind represented upon the paper money, completed the Mikado's costume.

## FIGHTING WITH FATE.

### CHAPTER XXXV.

AT daybreak upon the morning subsequent to Honor's disappearance from Bolton the gipsy waggon in which she was hidden away under a disguise which was likely to defy penetration came to a halt in a lonely country lane in Derbyshire, some forty miles distant from Bolton-le-Moors.

The spot was one that had served a hundred times as the scene of a gipsy encampment. It was strangely secluded, shut in between tall hedges, with no chimneys anywhere within view. A stream of water, a mere brook, crossed the highway and was spanned by a rustic bridge.

Bing unharnessed his horses and tethered them within range of the brook. The waggon was drawn close up under the hedge. Bing, looking every inch a gipsy in his disguise, gathered sticks of dry wood, fallen twigs and branches from trees at a little distance overhanging the road and laid them for a fire. Then he called his daughter.

The rear door of the waggon opened and Gustie Bing came forth in all the bravery of her gipsy attire.

"Is Miss Gilt awake?" asked the valet, in a low voice.

"She hasn't slept a wink the whole night," replied the girl, in a tone of personal injury.

"So," said Bing, in surprise, "she takes it harder than I expected. But she'll keep her word, Gustie, you may be sure of that. If you and I were to leave her here all alone she wouldn't run away after she promised that she wouldn't. She's one of them sappy sort that pride themselves on their honour and won't tell an untruth even when it's for their own interest to do so. Let her come out, Gustie, if she wants to. The fresh air will be good for her. And, Gustie, let's get breakfast."

The girl climbed back into the waggon and invited Honor to come out into the fresh air.

The young prisoner descended from the waggon to the ground.

The day was mild for March, with an April sky over head, and an April turf under foot.

The sun was shining. A few birds were singing in the fields near by.

Honor walked up and down the strip of turf bordering the grass-grown lane, very silent and very thoughtful.

Gustie Bing produced from one of the several lockers with which the waggon was provided a tea-kettle. She filled this with water from the brook, while her father lighted the fire.

He then hung the tea-kettle upon a cross piece of wood, upon two crocheted sticks over the fire.

Gustie brought some potatoes from one of the lockers also, and as soon as there were hot ashes she buried the potatoes in them, leaving them to roast.

She next dragged forth from its concealment a good-sized hamper, neatly packed with bread, cold roasted fowls, boiled tongue, ham pie, pickles, cheese, a can of condensed milk, a parcel of sugar, and other edibles.

This was deposited upon the lowest step at the rear of the waggon. Gustie then made coffee in the tea-kettle, and breakfast was soon ready.

Bing approached his involuntary guest politely, and offered her a camp stool. Honor placed it in the shadow of the hedge and sat upon it.

The valet then brought to her a clean table napkin and a plate, serving her with respectful courtesy.

"You must eat, miss, if you don't want to get ill," he said.

"Those eyes of yours look downright wild. No one will harm you. You're only to fancy yourself at a picnic to enjoy this out-door life. The roads are good, the weather fine, and you can walk about as much as you like. Take my advice. Don't mourn over what can't be helped."

Honor did not answer, but she drank a cup of coffee and ate a portion of the food which Gustie brought her.

Her jailers waited until she had finished eating, and then ate their breakfasts with appetite.

After the repast Gustie repacked the hamper, and Bing gave some grain to the horses, which were cropping the close brown roadside grass.

The valet then crept under the waggon, rolled himself in a blanket and went to sleep.

It was high noon when he awoke. Gustie had dinner ready, and Honor was slowly walking up and down the road.

Bing crept out from his resting-place with an anxious look in every direction.

"Anybody been along the lane this morning, Gustie?" he asked.

"Not a soul. The lane don't see much travel, I take it," responded the girl. "There must be some better road or short cut, that keeps the travel off it."

"So much the better for us," muttered Bing. "What has the young lady been doing all the morning?"

"Walking and thinking," answered Gustie. "She don't say much."

Bing again waited upon Honor with the attention of a devoted servant.

After she had eaten he took his own dinner in company with Gustie. Afterwards he fed his horses with an extra allowance of oats, and resumed his sleep under the waggon.

It was nearly night when he again awoke. No one had passed through the lane that afternoon.

Gustie had kindled a fire, and the red flames were flaring in the rising wind.

"We shall have a cold night," said Gustie, with a glance at the gray sky.

"Yes, but we shan't feel it, being as we are to be on the move," replied Bing. "I'd like to have a London newspaper. I wonder if the young lady's disappearance has made much fuss. Sir Hugh Tregaron must have stirred up the police pretty lively, but I haven't left much trace for them to follow up. I defy them to pursue me, after all the precautions I have taken."

Supper was prepared and eaten.

Then as dusk began to fall Gustie restored the hamper and kettle and camp stool to the waggon lockers, and scattered the ashes of the dying fire.

Bing had fed his horses upon awaking from his slumbers, and now harnessed them and attached them to the waggon.

"We're off again, miss," said Gustie, approaching Honor. "You'll have to get back into the waggon."

Honor complied, settling herself wearily again upon one of the divans. The rear door was locked, the steps put up, and Bing, having carefully reviewed their camping-ground, to make sure that no vestige of their presence there remained, mounted his box and resumed his course.

Upon this night "tired nature's sweet restorer" touched Honor's weary eyelids with soothing fingers. The young girl slept profoundly all night long, untroubled by joltings, and her profound slumbers were dreamless.

When she awakened in the morning it was after daylight, and the waggon had come to a halt. Gustie had withdrawn from the waggon, and the odour of breakfast came to Honor's nostrils. She arose, brushed out her dyed hair, and let it fall about her shoulders in an unconfined mass, the very touch of the darkened filaments being repugnant to her. Then she opened one of the windows and looked out.

The waggon had halted in the midst of a broad and breezy common. The spot was as lonely as that which had been chosen for the previous day's encampment.

Bing had studied his course thoroughly, and had selected out-of-the-way camping-grounds, where he could easily pass a whole day without being noticed.

The horses had been fed and watered, and were now lying down in the gorse.

Honor picked up her hat, around which Gustie had tied a bright red ribbon, and emerged from the waggon.

Breakfast was ready, and the captive was first served with respectful attention, Bing and his daughter eating when she had finished.

"This is not Lancashire," said Honor, strolling about for exercise. "Where are we?"

"We travelled over forty-five miles last night," declared Gustie, "and this is Leicestershire."

"How much longer is our journeying to continue?" asked Honor, finding the girl unusually communicative.

"We shall reach our destination to-morrow morning, if all goes well," said Gustie. "There, I can't tell you more."

She turned away, leaving Honor to her own reflections.

This second day was nearly a repetition of the previous one. Dinner was eaten at noon, supper a little before dusk.

Bing slept all the forenoon, and again all the afternoon. The horses were given a heavy allowance of grain at regular intervals, and watered, and after supper Bing groomed them carefully, and again harnessed them to the waggon.

"Good grooming goes as far with horses as corn," he remarked as his beasts pawed the ground in their impatience to be off. "Get your hamper into the waggon, Gusty. Pick up every scrap of food, every bit of paper. You must be as sharp as if you expected people along here within an hour to search for us."

Gusty obeyed. When twilight began to deepen into the starless night Honor re-entered the waggon, everything was made snug, and Bing mounted his box, driving away at a smart pace.

The night proved to be like its two predecessors, dark and gloomy. The rain fell heavily upon the waggon roof.

Bing, in a cabman's mackintosh, and sheltered by the projecting hood of the waggon, was quite comfortable. His powerful horses drew the waggon as if it had been a light spring cart. The weather being so bad, no one was encountered upon the roads.

After ten o'clock the lights died out of the occasional road-side farmhouses, and the gipsy waggon plodded on through the heavy rain unseen and unheard.

Bing urged his horses upon this night to greater exertion than he had before required of them. He regarded them as "seasoned" by their two previous nights' toil, and was determined to exact from them upon this night a march of fifty miles between the hours of seven in the evening and four in the morning.

"That will bring us to our destination about daylight," he thought, "or a little earlier. No one will see us drive up to the Cypresses. And that will be very good time too considering the driving rain. There never was a journey more secretly or more expeditiously performed than this will have been if we arrive safely in the morning. My sister must have the house in prime order for us. Clever dodge that, of actually renting the house from Mr. Moor, and having a paper to show for it. The farmer supposes Judith to be a *bona-fide* tenant."

Honor slept well upon this night also, lulled by the beating of the rains upon the waggon roof.

It was morning when she awakened, a dark and rainy morning before the day-dawn.

The waggon was being driven into a high walled stable yard, where it came to a halt.

Bing climbed down from his box and unharnessed the horses, driving them into a stable. The sound of clanging hoofs upon a stable floor aroused Gusty and she started up, exclaiming:

"We must have got to our journey's end."

She pulled up the window shade, drew back the curtain and pushed up the window, peering out into the gloom.

"It's as dark as a pocket," she announced, "and it's raining cats and dogs. There's no one in the yard but dad. I suppose we are to remain in the waggon till daylight."

This supposition proved erroneous. Bing cared for his horses, and then tramped across the stable yard, disappearing from view.

He presently returned with a lighted lantern, an umbrella, a long waterproof cloak and a pair of goshaws.

Gusty opened the rear door of the waggon, and he passed in the cloak and overshoes.

"Tell the young lady to put these on, Gusty," he said. "We are going into the house."

Honor enveloped herself in the protecting garments and descended from the waggon. Bing drew her arm in his, holding the umbrella over her and carrying the lantern.

He led her across the stable yard, out at a small gate, into a house yard, Gusty following. The house yard and kitchen garden, as the plot of ground appeared to be, were both enclosed by a stone wall. Crossing the yard, Bing conducted his young captive up a flight of stone steps, through an open door, into a wide old hall which was flagged with stone.

A lamp burned drearily here upon a wooden shelf, the light sufficient to reveal the bareness and dreariness of the place. A woman came from somewhere amid the farther shadows—a tall, gaunt personage, with clinging garments and slipshod feet, her swarthy face lit by a pair of gleaming eyes, an immense pair of gold hoops in her ears, and a cushion of black hair surmounting her head.

"It's I, Judith!" said Bing, laying down his umbrella and releasing the girl, while Gusty secured the door.

"I supposed it was," said the amiable Miss Bing, in a snapping voice. "As it hasn't been but two minutes since you came in for an umbrella, I did not take you to be the prime minister come on a visit to me."

"Where is the young lady's room?" inquired Gusty. "This way," replied Miss Bing, snatching up the lantern. "Bring her along."

She flitted along the hall, her footsteps echoing, and began to mount a flight of stone stairs. Honor was forced to follow her, Bing seizing the arm of the captive, and Gusty coming on behind her.

They proceeded to an upper room, with a small window set with tiny diamond panes, in heavy leaden mullions. This window was so secured with iron spikes that it could not be opened except with proper tools and an expenditure of considerable strength.

"This is your room, miss," said Miss Bing. "My room is next, and I'm a light sleeper always. You won't be able to escape, and I advise you to make yourself comfortable."

Honor looked about her keenly.

The room was decently furnished, a carpet covering the floor, a lounge being against the wall, and a tall, handsomely carved high-post bedstead occupying one corner. There was an easy-chair or two, a gay hearth rug, and, best of all upon that cheerless morning, there was a bright coal fire in the grate.

"Where am I?" asked Honor, with brave calmness and with a trifle of imperiousness in her fresh young voice. "What house is this? In what country is it?"

"I don't know as there is any objection to telling you," said Bing. "You are in Huntingdonshire, miss, at a country place among the fens known as the Cypresses."

"Who owns the place?"

"Your husband, madam," said Bing, with an evil smile. "You have come home as a bride should to your husband's house. He is your husband, your lord, your master. You gave him supreme control over your destiny of your own free will, and you cannot complain if he chooses to exercise it. You are here to await his coming."

A cry broke from Honor's lips.

The Bings abruptly withdrew and closed and locked the door.

They went downstairs to the kitchen, a broad, low room, with mullioned windows now curtained, a brick floor, old-fashioned high-backed wooden settles, and a great yawning fireplace, in which burning heavy logs were now ablaze. Two or three kettles were suspended over the fire.

The chimney-piece was formed of Dutch tiles, with quaint old pictures painted upon them.

A dresser laden with wares of delf and tin filled an adjacent nook.

It was the kitchen of a century ago, preserved in all its details of projecting darkened beams overhead, cavernous fireplace, furniture and mantelpiece.

"Has my brother come yet?" demanded Bing as he entered this ancient room.

A man arose from one of the settles, rubbing his eyes. His likeness to the valet proclaimed him his brother.

"I'm glad you're here, Jacob," said Bing, nodding coolly. "You are to put on these clothes of mine, darken your skin, and disguise yourself as a gipsy, and take the waggon back to the place I got it from. Gusty will go with you. The gipsy chief will give you back half the money I left with him as security. The waggon must stand in the stable-yard to-day, and you must be off soon after dark to-night. When you shall have delivered the waggon to its owner cast off your disguise and go home with Gusty."

"I understand," said Jacob.

"Good. Has there been anything in the papers about the missing young lady?"

"Not a word. It's been kept out of the newspapers."

"Good also. We have come as secretly as snakes. I'll defy the police, and those that set them on. We are hidden completely here. Have you seen anything of the farmer?"

"No; I arrived secretly the night before last," replied Jacob, "and lay hid all day yesterday. I have seen no one."

"The farmer came over the first day after I came on alone," said Miss Bing, rubbing the end of her red and bulbous nose viciously, "but I soon got rid of him and haven't seen him since. He won't trouble us with being sociable. How long shall you stay here, Nelson?"

"A day or two," answered the valet. "The young lady upstairs holds a certain paper, and before I go away I want to know where it is."

"I can tell you," said Gusty. "She wears a gold chain around her neck inside her dress, and hanging upon the chain is a curious black shining ball, and a little oil-silk bag with a folded paper in it. I heard the bag crackle."

"That's the paper I want," said the valet. "I shan't go away without it. And you need not doubt I shall take it with me when I go."

"Is the young lady's husband coming to see her?" asked Miss Bing.

"I presume he is. He loves her while he hates her. She is his wife in any case, and we are not risking anything in obeying his commands to bring her to his house," said the valet. "I shall get that paper and take it to my master. Then he will decide what is to be done with his wife. One thing is certain," he added, compressing his lips, "her future will be different from her expectations. She won't be set at liberty so soon as she may anticipate. She belongs to her husband, and she is in his power. If I am not mistaken she'll soon find that she is in the hands of a vindictive master."

#### CHAPTER XXVI.

We will now take up the thread of Darrel Moor's experiences at the point where it was dropped.

Lord Waldemar's nephew was standing in the broad hall of the house in Park Lane, with his hand upon the door of the drawing-room, where Miss Floyd and Mrs. Watchley awaited him, when Grimrod arrived, and was admitted.

The manager was well muffled against the chill of the March night. He relinquished his wrappings into the hands of the hall porter, extended his hand to Darrel Moor, and inquired for Lord Waldemar.

"His lordship has just gone to the House of Lords," replied Moor. "He speaks to-night. But the ladies are at home. Won't you come into the drawing-room?"

"Thank you, no, not just yet," said Grimrod. "I haven't dined, so I'll make my way to the dining-room, and see what the butler can give me."

"When you come up look for me in the library," said Moor. "I have something to say to you before you join the ladies."

A significant gleam came into the manager's eyes. He signified his assent, and made his way to the dining-hall.

Moor entered the drawing-room.

The two ladies sat idle and empty-handed, the elder deeply thoughtful, the younger full of fretful impatience.

Both looked up quickly at Moor's entrance, having heard the sound of an arrival.

"Grimrod has come to see my uncle," remarked Moor—"Lord Waldemar's business manager, you know."

Mrs. Watchley looked relieved.

"What brought him here, I wonder?" said the heiress.

"Business, of course," replied Moor. "He attends to all of Lord Waldemar's business, looking after farm bailiffs, attending to leases, collecting rentals, investing money, and directing repairs. He is Lord Waldemar's right hand."

Moor waited in the drawing-room until he heard Grimrod mounting the stairs, and then he excused himself and joined the manager, going with him to the library.

When the two were alone together in the lofty room, with the door locked against intrusion, Grimrod sank into an easy-chair, while Moor walked impatiently to and fro.

The manager watched the younger man with a strange, inscrutable smile upon his dark visage.

"Has anything happened?" asked Grimrod. "You look disturbed. Are you in trouble, Mr. Moor?"

"Yes—no," stammered Moor.

"If you want money," said Grimrod, "my purse is open to you, sir."

"Thanks. I may accept your offer, but it is not of that I wish to speak to you. I may as well make a clean breast of it. Perhaps you can help me. Grimrod, I have followed your advice and have—have fallen in love with Miss Floyd. I asked her this morning to marry me, and she consented. We are betrothed."

Grimrod's Mephistophelean visage did not express the satisfaction he certainly felt.

But he exclaimed, with a heartiness foreign to his nature:

"Allow me to congratulate you, sir. You have won a beautiful bride, of whom you may well be proud. Miss Floyd is without a peer in point of beauty, and is as amiable as she is accomplished. She will make you happy I do not doubt."

Darrel Moor made a grimace as if tasting a nauseous medicine.

"She's a bitter pill to me, Grimrod," he said, with a frankness that brought a dull red flush to the manager's face. "But then she's gilded. As my uncle's business manager it is of course to your interests to exalt his heiress into a goddess. She will bear all the flattery you can force yourself to give her. And it may pay you in the end, as of course she'll keep you in your present position when she becomes Baroness of Waldemar. But you needn't flatter her to me. I am no lackadaisical lover sighing my heart out. I know that Hilda Floyd has got a fiendish temper, that she is vain, selfish, and ungrateful, but it's for my in-



terest to marry her, and I will marry her. I shall make her a good husband, as husbands go, humour her caprices, and let her go her own gait as I shall go mine. I will promise not to interfere with her."

"You don't indeed talk like a lover," said Grimrod, the flush beginning to fade from his face, yet speaking in a constrained voice. "The girl has a right to claim a husband's devotion."

"I am prepared to make an utter sacrifice of myself," said Moer, half mockingly. "When she is once my wife I daresay I shall be proud of her. At any rate I shall enjoy whatever portion of her money may fall to me. I am not a man for sentiment."

"Nor I," said the manager, more cordially. "I am glad you have wooed and won Miss Floyd. Have you said anything to Lord Waldemar?"

"Ay, there's the rub. I spoke to him after dinner—not an hour ago—upon the subject. He received my proposal in a kinder spirit than I expected, but refused to allow his grand-daughter to marry me under three years. He wants her to see society first, and to know other people. He says if at the end of three years we—Hilda and I—are of the same mind we shall have his permission to marry. But who wants to wait three years? If the girl is to be my wife I want her now. Hilda prefers an immediate marriage too, because she can then enter society. My uncle has formed the project of keeping her under masters and governesses for a year longer, and Hilda is in a state of active insubordination in consequence."

"She has been led to expect an immediate introduction to society. She's fond of gaiety, like all girls of her age. I think Lord Waldemar makes a mistake in placing her again under teachers. What are you going to do about this long probation, Mr. Moer?"

"I shall marry the girl out of hand," replied Moer, a stormy look on his handsome face. "If I ever marry her at all I shall marry her quietly and secretly by special licence in some lonely church as soon as she shall have been three weeks in London. A residence of three weeks in the parish is required, I believe, to render the marriage valid?"

"You are right. You ought not to do anything that can invalidate the marriage. I see no objection to a clandestine ceremony."

"But what would my uncle say?—that's the question! He cast off his own son for a clandestine marriage, and he might serve us the same sauce."

"The case is not parallel," replied Grimrod. "His son married the daughter of his enemy. In this case his nephew would marry his grand-daughter. The first act savoured of treachery and deceit and ingratitude. The latter can be excused on various grounds. You have spoken to him, and received his partial approval too. His lordship is an older man than when he cast off his son. At sixty-eight one does not banish all one's kindred for a slight error or disobedience. I have influence with him, and can perhaps soften his wrath. On the whole, Mr. Moer, I advise you to go ahead."

"But what if he should prove implacable?" Grimrod crossed one knee with the other leg as he replied, easily:

"Give yourself no anxiety upon that account. Even if he should prove implacable he could not embitter your lives as he did his son's. He might withdraw your allowance, true. But he can't live many years, and at his death you come into one of the finest estates in the kingdom. A man might sell his soul for the barony and estates of Waldemar."

"You speak as if you would sell your soul for them, Grimrod," said Moer, with a smile.

"I might make a worse bargain," replied Grimrod, coolly. "But to keep to the point. Lord Waldemar, in the event of his bitterest wrath, cannot keep you out of his property many years. If Hilda Floyd did not stand in your way you would be his lordship's heir. Your marriage with Miss Floyd consolidates your rival interests. Under the peculiar circumstances I should be willing to lend you assistance. I am rich, thanks to my lord's generosity. I will place my fortune at your disposal, Mr. Moer, and you can live in luxury while you await Lord Waldemar's demise. You can repay me when you come into the inheritance."

"With interest, double and treble," cried Moer. "I see my way, Grimrod, thanks to you. I will marry the heiress. I will accept your offer in the event of Lord Waldemar casting me off. It almost seems as if you had a personal interest in the matter. The marriage will soon be a fixed fact."

He shook hands warmly with the manager. A little later Darrel Moer went out to his club, and Grimrod went into the drawing-room.

Mrs. Watchley was alone at the moment, Miss Floyd having gone to the music-room.

"It's all right, Grimrod," she said, eagerly. "Hilda and Darrel Moer are engaged."

Grimrod gave her a warning glance that checked her ecstasies.

"I have been made aware of all this," he said: "first from your telegram, secondly from Mr. Moer himself. I have just had an interview with him. He talks like a sensible man; and the marriage will take place in just three weeks. You must tell the girl to be very guarded lest Lord Waldemar suspect what is in the wind."

Hilda Floyd came in from the music-room.

Grimrod greeted her with marked courtesy.

She gave him a little sour nod, and sat down before the hearth, yawning.

Grimrod, being a man of tact, thought it better not to speak of her engagement to the heiress in a direct manner, but told her that he had heard of his lordship's intention to keep her under instructors for a year more, instead of allowing her to enter society.

"He'll find that I have a will of my own," said Miss Floyd, fiercely. "I am no longer a child, and I won't be treated as one. I shall marry Darrel Moer and become my own mistress, and I don't care if you tell grandpa so. If Darrel Moer asks me I'll go to church with him to-morrow."

"You must live in the parish three weeks before you can marry him," said the manager. "I admire your spirit, Miss Floyd. Let me tell you that your success as a married belle will be far greater than as a single one. You will have more freedom, and will find yourself surrounded by a small court. Mr. Moer is in the possession of ample means, and can maintain you in luxury, while you both await the inevitable event which is to make you titled and rich in your own right."

Miss Floyd regarded Grimrod more graciously than usual.

Before the evening was over she had nearly begun to regard him as a friend, although now and then her native insolence cropped out, and she showed herself suspicious and overbearing.

Meanwhile Darrel Moer spent the evening at his club.

He was returning home at a late hour, and was sauntering along Park Lane to the Waldemar mansion, when a man came dashing down the steps of Lady Thaxter's residence, and was in the act of passing him when a mutual recognition occurred.

The man was the young Cornish baronet, Sir Hugh Tregaron.

He halted abruptly, exclaiming, authoritatively: "Hold, Mr. Moer! I have something to say to you. It occurs to me that you may be able to enlighten me. Miss Gint has been a guest of Lady Thaxter, and went to Bolton this morning on receipt of a telegram from Mrs. Gint's daughter announcing her mother's mortal illness. Miss Gint went to Bolton in charge of Lady Thaxter's companion, and we have just received a telegram from Mrs. Early that this morning's telegram from Bolton was a fabrication and a sham, and that Miss Gint has disappeared. Do you know anything concerning this matter?"

His stern, passionate eyes searched Darrel Moer's face.

That face expressed surprise, a mild astonishment even, and certainly looked devoid of guilt.

Sir Hugh was not satisfied.

"Answer me," commanded Sir Hugh. "Are you a mover or originator in any conspiracy against Miss Gint?"

"I am not—upon my honour as a gentleman," declared Darrel Moer, his hand upon his heart.

"And your man Bing, who was at Southport," demanded Sir Hugh, "where is he?"

"In town," was the response. "I discharged the dog this very evening, and he's haunting some public-house."

Sir Hugh searched Darrel Moer's countenance with an increasing sternness.

"See here, Mr. Moer," he exclaimed, "let there be an understanding between us. I know that you are married to Honor Gint. I have seen the certificate of your marriage to her in the chapel at Bolton. I know too that Honor is your wife only in name, and that she would rather die than become your wife in fact. I believe you desire to possess yourself of that marriage certificate, since Bing was sent to Southport to steal it. But the loss of that certificate will not invalidate your marriage to Honor. I wish to Heaven it would. In that case Honor herself would have destroyed it. But the register of the marriage remains in the official book of the chapel, and has by this time been transferred to Somerset House. You cannot blot out those official proofs."

Knowing that there were no proofs of that hasty marriage in existence beyond the certificate in question, Darrel Moer could have smiled.

He maintained his gravity, however, bowing courteously.

"Mrs. Early's telegram is not very clear," said Sir Hugh, after a moment's reflection. "She was evidently labouring under strong excitement when she wrote it. Miss Gint may have been run away with

by a frightened cab horse. I can't quite gather the truth, but Mrs. Early hinted at the young lady's disappearance as the work of an enemy. I start for Bolton immediately. I shall charter a special train. If I find that Miss Gint has come to harm through you, Darrel Moer, it will be the sorriest day of your life, that in which I make the discovery. If you have wrought any harm to Honor an awful retribution shall come to you, if I have to pursue you over the whole earth. Remember."

The next moment the young baronet, with his flashing, passionate eyes, had swept on like an incarnate whirlwind down the street.

Darrel Moer paused and looked after him with a curling lip.

"When you find the girl let me know," he muttered. "All this excitement may cause me to change my course in regard to her. I may find it to my interest not to let her loose again, to invoke against me such fearful retribution. I begin to see that I shall not be free from that girl till she's in her grave! Sir Hugh Tregaron shall never see her face again!"

(To be continued.)

**A BALLOON FEAT.**—The aeronaut Eugène Pasqual, from Paris, recently went up from Hamburg with a colossal balloon, measuring 118 feet in circumference and 45 in vertical diameter, and containing 35,000 cubic feet of hydrogen gas. At the height of 500 feet the aeronaut was seen descending by a trap in the basket, and hanging by one foot on a trapeze, and performing several feats worthy of a Java bat. Both travellers landed safely on the other bank of the Elbe, after an hour and a half's navigation. Such exhibitions ought to be encouraged in a country which considers its population too numerous.

**THE "KING" AND THE PRINCE OF WALES.**—When the dead "king," shot by the Prince of Wales at Chillingham Forest, was brought to the neighbourhood of the castle her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales came out, accompanied by Lady Tankerville, Lady Skelmersdale, Lady Warnecliffe, and Lady Sandwich, to inspect him, and, by command of his Royal Highness, Mr. Downey, of London and Newcastle, took a series of photographs of the dead bull, with the Prince standing over him, rifle in hand. Her Royal Highness commissioned Signor Bartlett, who has been engaged for several years in carving the woodwork of Alnwick Castle, to make a drawing of the bull.

**THE BRITISH DAIRYMAID.**—A great triumph of the British dairymaid took place when the Japanese Embassy paid a visit to the home farm of Lord Blantyre, at Freeland. At the time the steam thrashing machine was in full operation, and the Embassy appeared particularly interested in its working, especially as to the separation of the straw from the grain. When one of Mr. Barr's dairymaids made her appearance—a robust, healthy, and fully developed specimen of her class—several of the ambassadors were quite taken aback, and when asked if they had anything like that in Japan they shook their heads despondingly and appeared highly astonished.

**GENTLEMEN CADETS AT WOOLWICH.**—The following are the authors and periods of history in which candidates will be examined for admission to the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, at the examination to be held in May, 1873:—English authors: Chaucer, "Prologue to the Canterbury Tales" and "Knight's Tale;" Shakespeare, "King Lear" and "Julius Cæsar;" Bacon, "Advancement of Learning;" Milton, "Paradise Lost"—Books 4 and 5; Dryden, "Absalom and Achitophel;" Macaulay's Essays on "Milton," "Sir W. Temple," "The Wars of Succession in Spain," and "Addison;" Scott, "Peveril of the Peak" and "Old Mortality;" Period of History: The "History of England" from A.D. 1660 to 1727.

**HYDROPHOBIA.**—A contemporary states that there exists in the heart of the Ardennes an obscure and antiquated little village, nestling round a fine old abbey church, dedicated to St. Hubert, whither resort annually the average number of 140 persons from Germany, Tyrol, Switzerland, Belgium, etc., to participate in what they are firmly convinced is an infallible cure for hydrophobia. This belief—justified, it is stated, by the result—has existed for eleven centuries, during which time, it is asserted, the remedy has never been known to fail, unless the regulations enjoined have been wilfully violated. The place is a few miles off the railroad, and sufficiently picturesque to form an attraction to the pedestrian tourist and artist. The writer of the communication remained there a couple of days, during which he obtained every detail connected with its local characteristics, and, without attempting in any way to explain the circumstance or to urge it on the belief of any one, he asserts that he was not able to meet with any one, however sceptical, who could be got to deny the efficacy of the remedy.



[PETULANT MISS GALE.]

## CUPID AT OAKGLADE.

"THERE it is again! I never was so worried by anything in my life! Fred Gale!—Gale! Gale! I'm sure I hate him already. I don't believe in perfect people, and one would think to hear you talk that he was without the ghost of a fault. You've praised him so much that I shudder when I see your lips form that awful G—that ubiquitous G—that valorous G—that aerated G—which keeps us in a continued gale! Now I never want to hear the name again!"

Agnes Parker tossed her book upon the table, folded her round, snowy arms with a determined air, and threw herself on the lounge by the west window. The mild breeze floating in blew her dark curls over her brow, and kissed the cheeks that nature had painted with her softest and brightest hue.

Marian Blake gazed upon her for a moment in mingled admiration and regret, and then said, quietly:

"If you knew him as I do you could not but love him!"

"Well, I don't, and I'm glad of it, and I hope I never shall," replied Agnes, impatiently. "If I thought he was within fifty miles of this place I'd leave within an hour. And I will as it is, miss, if you don't quit talking about him."

"Don't be cross, Agnes."

"I'm not, thank you; but you are so fussy. I'm going to chase butterflies."

Catching her hat, she danced out of the room and down the velvety lawn, her sweet voice carolling a merry song, and her little feet keeping perfect time as they skipped over the verdant carpet.

Now chasing a squirrel by the wall, then starting a bird from its covert went the light-hearted girl until the bridge was reached. Then she paused to take breath, meantime gazing into the limpid wavelets, and watching the sunshine as it gilded each one.

On either side of the brook and along by the bridge were thick growths of willows.

Agnes now changed her position, and for the first time ascertained that she was not alone. No, there was a tall, handsome man, with a golden moustache and the bluest eyes, standing on the margin of the brook, placidly fishing.

In this brief description I use Agnes's own words. They discovered each other at the same instant. He, with a bright smile, raised his hat, and remarked upon the beauty of the landscape. Agnes stepped back, nodded, blushed, and then dropped her eyes, and began playing with her hat strings. For a few moments there was a provoking silence.

"You live about here I presume?" he said, at length, and smiled again as if at the simplicity of his own words.

Agnes shook her head, peeped out of one eye and then bent closer over her ribbon.

The young man remained silent for a moment, during which time he took two pickerel from their native element. Agnes watched him covertly, wondering what he would say next. It was "real fun" to stand there and watch him and hear the birds sing and see the fish leap out of the water. It recalled scenes she had read, and at the time she thought the heroes were a little too handsome, but now she beheld one in real life far more beautiful than any of them. Suddenly a suspicion flew in upon her mind and disturbed her very much, though this fisherman was an utter stranger to her. Impulsively she queried:

"Is your name Fred Gale?"

"I wouldn't have such a name," he answered, shrugging his great, broad shoulders.

"Oh, I'm so glad," said Agnes, clapping her hands.

He looked up inquiringly, and she blushed deeply as she thought of the expression she had given to her enthusiasm.

"I infer that Mr. Gale stands rather low in your estimation?" said the angler, in his dry way.

"Yes—I hate him."

"Poor fellow!" muttered he, shaking his head compassionately.

Agnes laughed, there was an irresistible humour in the stranger's manner.

When the last echo of her mirth had died away she said:

"You don't know this Gale either, do you?"

"I hope not. I assure you I want nothing to do with him. He doesn't live here, does he?"

"Oh, no."

"Then I breathe again. By the way you won't object to giving me your name, will you?"

"Agnes," she replied, averting her eyes as he smiled in his roguish way.

"Ah! and is that all?"

"No," she said, with a toss of her curls.

"Singular," he remarked, laughingly. "What's the rest?"

"Parker," she answered, demurely. "Now please introduce yourself, sir, for we have sacrificed etiquette to nonsense."

"I am Sam."

"Not Chetwynd?"

"No, I haven't that honour; but I'm often taken for him."

"He'd be cross if he knew it. But what's your other, as the children say?"

"Beach—Sam Beach."

"What a homely name!" she exclaimed, her dusky eyes sparkling with mischief.

"So my wife says," he mused.

"Oh, dear, he's married after all," thought Agnes, sighing as her little romance faded away. "I mustn't talk with him any more."

And having waited a few moments that he might not think his words had driven her away, she nodded and started toward home.

"You look sad, dear," said Marian as Agnes entered the little sitting-room.

"Well, I am, and I'm not ashamed of it," she replied, kneeling down and resting her head in her friend's lap.

Presently she said, hesitatingly:

"Do you believe in love at first sight, Marian?"

"Not as a general thing, but there are cases of that kind. Why do you ask?"

"Because I've seen a man that I love and I can't help it—but he's married."

"Have you taken leave of your senses, Agnes?"

The reply was a shower of tears, and then it dawned upon Marian's mind that her friend was certainly affected by the delusion if not by the fact. Gently soothing her, Marian requested an explanation, and in a broken voice Agnes told her of the interview by the brook.

It seemed very ridiculous, and Marian wanted to laugh, but the sight of the pale, tearful face upraised to hers changed the feeling to that of sympathy.

"You say there are such cases, and why should it not occur with me as well as another? You think I am silly and weak, but I will show you that to love is to be strong. If he is married I shall stamp his image from my heart—if he is free he shall be mine."

The round fair face grew white with resolution and the dark eyes shone with the light of firmness.

Three days passed.

Agnes had not seen Mr. Beach or heard of him. No one knew such a person, and the poor girl began to believe, as Marian suggested, that he was only a transient visitor at the village inn, and had gone away—perhaps for ever.

Of course he never thought of the few words they exchanged, and who would? It was not his fault, but all her own, and she must bear as well as she could the misery she had made for herself.

It was the afternoon of the fifth day since the memorable conversation.

Agnes was sitting at the west window with her head resting upon her hand, and her eyes downcast.

"Will you give me a drink of water?"

She started up confused and trembling! How well she knew that voice! She struggled with herself a moment, and then, smiling composedly, answered:

"Certainly; won't you come in?"

He accepted her invitation, and when Agnes returned with the water Marian was present waiting to be introduced. Very gracefully Agnes performed the simple ceremony, and a desultory conversation followed.

"You wouldn't care to take a couple of boarders for a few weeks, I suppose?" said Mr. Beach.

Marian reflected for a moment, and then replied: "It depends a great deal upon who they are. I have room enough, but I am expecting company from London, and—"

"You don't want any one who is not fit to associate with them," interposed Mr. Beach, with a



peculiar smile. "Very good. I referred to myself and—"

"Your wife, I suppose," interrupted Marian. "No, my dog, who lays out on the lawn. Pretty, isn't he?"

"A darling!" exclaimed Agnes, enthusiastically. "You can give me references as to your character, I presume?" said Marian, formally.

"Oh, yes, several volumes bound in calf," he rejoined, in his volatile way.

Marian bit her lip, but whether from vexation or amusement Agnes could not determine. She gave it no farther thought however, for at that moment it was decided that Mr. Beach should remain with them for a month at least.

"Oh, Marian, I'm so delighted! I'm so thankful to you for taking him," said Agnes, when she bade her friend good-night, and the latter knew that the words were true, for there was a tear left on her cheek—a drop from the joy that welled up in the maiden's heart.

The days flew rapidly now, for Agnes was constantly in the society of the man she loved. She had discovered that he was not married, and this gave her great relief, which, however, was at times overshadowed by the thought that he might be the betrothed of another.

This conjecture was almost verified by the arrival of a young lady—one of Marian's friends—whom Mr. Beach greeted with earnest cordiality, and Agnes thought that the lady looked up to him in that tender, trusting way which is supposed to belong only to those who are very near and dear.

Filled with grief and jealousy, Agnes hurried to her room, and shut herself up. Having indulged in a good cry, and imagined enough misery for ten young women in love, she bathed her face and went down to dinner.

Mr. Beach was very attentive to Miss Gale—that horrid name again!

Agnes wondered if she was the sister of that perfect young man, and, when she ascertained that such was the fact, vexation and detestation of the lovely blonde were added to the turbulent feelings that possessed the breast of our little brunette.

"I should like to know why you are so disagreeable, Agnes Parker," said Marian one day when somewhat out of patience.

"Now you go to work and be cross," answered Agnes, just ready to weep. "Haven't I enough to bear? I believe everybody thinks that I have no feeling."

"There, there, dear, I didn't mean to displease or pain you, but I am much annoyed. Mr. Beach torments me with his horrid nonsense."

"Tisn't horrid nonsense! It's genuine natural wit! He could make himself an enduring fame if he would let his humour out on paper. I think you ought to be ashamed to say so, Marian," and now the tears came in earnest.

Agnes had sought Marian with the intention of confiding to her her troubles, and indulging in a few reproaches of Beach, but—and here comes in feminine consistency—the instant Marian breathed a word against him she was angry, and wondered how any one could see any fault in him, and, seeing it, could be heartless enough to refer to it.

Despite Marian's protestations that she meant nothing against the character of Mr. Beach, Agnes still wept, and refused to be comforted. Justly indignant at such waywardness Marian left her to herself. For a short time Agnes remained in the sitting-room, and then, having dried her eyes, proceeded to the kitchen in the hope of finding Marian and doing penance. Instead, she saw Miss Gale's maid, who was preparing a lunch for her mistress.

While she stood there Mr. Beach looked in from the other door, handed a book to the maid, and directed her to give it to her mistress with his compliments. Agnes glanced at it and saw that it was an elegantly bound volume, and could not help feeling that he had deceived her, for why should he woo her by eye and by voice, and woo another by gift? She controlled her expression, however, and when the maid entered Miss Gale's chamber to carry the book Agnes waited outside, and—must it be written?—listened.

Love drives people to acts good and bad that they never would thought of her before, and Agnes on that account excused herself for playing the part of a spy. She heard Miss Gale exclaim, petulantly:

"He knows that I hate poetry—the great number—"

Then followed the rustle of paper and the sound of something falling. Could it be possible that she had hurled this gift from her? To Agnes the mere thought was sacrilegious, and partly from curiosity and partly from indignation she resolved to find out. So when the maid was ready to carry in the lunch Agnes rolled up her sleeves and begged the privilege of assuming her duty, giving as a reason that she wished to speak privately with Miss Gale.

The girl gladly assented; and taking the tray from her hands Agnes entered the room.

Miss Gale was reclining on the sofa, apparently asleep, and opposite to her on the floor lay Mr. Beach's present, the leaves crushed and defaced, and the beautiful crimson covers bent at the edges.

Agnes placed the salver on the table, and with a contemptuous glance at the willful beauty turned and left the room.

Slight as it was, the incident affected her deeply.

Why was it that men invariably lavished their love upon unworthy objects, while true hearts yearned for it?

This and similar questions Agnes asked herself, then, weary with trying to solve the mystery of life, she went again to her room.

That day she saw Mr. Beach but once, and then at a distance, and the next day he went to a picnic with Miss Gale, so she did not see him at all.

She assured herself that she did not care, and all the time the tears were running down her cheeks, and her heart was throbbing wildly with grief and jealousy.

"I'm going home, Marian," she said the next morning. "I can't stay here, and I wish—I wish I had never come."

"My poor darling, I am very sorry for this," murmured Marian, tenderly kissing the quivering lips. "I never dreamed you cared so much for this stranger. Try to drive him from your mind—try very hard, Agnes, for it pains me to see you so sad."

"If I only could—if I only could!" she cried, clasping her friend's wrists tenaciously, and raising her streaming eyes to her face. "But, Marian, dear Marian, I love him with my whole soul, and—I can't keep his eyes out of my sight—they seem to be looking at me always. I know you will think me very foolish, but, as Heaven is my judge, I can't help it. But I'll go away, and—and at least I shall be free from his presence, and perhaps—perhaps I shall forget him and marry some old man for his money. Oh, dear!"

She caught her breath hysterically, then, provoked at herself for evincing so much emotion, she broke from her friend's embrace and ran swiftly from the room.

In the entry she came face to face with Mr. Beach. "Let me pass, if you please!" she said, laughingly. "Presently," he answered, in that impudent but peculiarly pleasant way of his. "I have not seen you for two days you know, and now I must take a long look."

"Did you hear me, sir?" she demanded, with flashing eyes.

"I beg your pardon. I had no idea you were really angry," he responded, and with a graceful bow he stepped aside.

"It's all over now—he'll never speak to me again," sobbed Agnes, when once more alone in her room. "It's my fault too, but I could not sacrifice my pride! Oh, why is pride given us? Isn't there trouble enough with love? But I won't be a baby any more. I'll just pack my trunks and start for home to-morrow morning."

And sinking upon her knees she commenced her task.

Marian was surprised as well as pained when she learned that Agnes was really about to leave her, but she commended her action and encouraged her in the belief that time would soon drive Mr. Beach from her thoughts.

At seven o'clock the next morning the lumbering old stage-coach rumbled up to the door; and having kissed Marian a dozen times and wept upon her breast Agnes entered the vehicle, and was borne rapidly away.

It was a long ride through the valleys and over the hills, and Agnes felt a great relief when they stopped at a village for dinner.

Half the journey was accomplished, and at night she would be home.

There was a certain consolation in the thought that increased her appetite, and thus rendered her more cheerful.

Dinner over, she went into a sitting-room to wait until "starting time." It was lonely there, for the other passengers, being all masculine, had congregated round the bar.

"Oh, dear, I wish I had some one to speak to," mused Agnes, drawing a long breath.

"If you consider me some one I shall be only too happy to listen!"

And Mr. Beach moved in from the dining-room, smiling in his genial manner.

Agnes started—essay to reply, but the words seemed wedged in her throat. Then by a powerful effort she became calm, and regarded him somewhat superciliously.

He seated himself at her side, and bent his blue eyes tenderly upon her.

She knew that she must say something to break the magic of his presence, so she remarked, coldly:

"Will you be kind enough to tell why you intrude upon me?"

"Will you do justice to yourself and act naturally?"

She rose quickly, and would have left the room, but he took both her hands in his, and said, in a low, earnest voice:

"Once you have checked my speech, but now courtesy and kindness compel you to listen. Agnes, I love you—"

"Stop—let me go!" she exclaimed, struggling to free herself.

"Agnes, be reasonable. If you cannot and will not love me, if you wish me to think that your smiles have been deceitful, then bid me leave you and I will go. But until my words are answered I shall hold you."

There was a deep pathos to the last clause that banished confusion, and sent a thrill of joy to the maiden's heart. She bowed her head, and a soft carmine flush crept over her neck and face.

"Speak, Agnes. You hold my happiness for all time in your keeping. Will you destroy it?"

"No."

In a faint whisper the word left her lips, and for an instant she raised her eyes to his.

"You will return with me to Oakglade?"

"Yes."

"My darling!"

He uttered the words rapturously, and pressed his first kiss upon her brow. There was a reverence in the act that revealed the noble depths of his nature. For a short time they conversed as lovers old and young delight in doing, then Mr. Beach went out and ordered a carriage.

When the sunlight was gilding the western horizon with its departing rays Agnes and her companion drove up before Marian's home.

Of course Marian was astonished, and asked many questions, but Agnes was very reticent and smiled very significantly.

Her expression changed, however, when Miss Gale came in and kissed Mr. Beach without the least ceremony.

"Of course you don't object to that, Agnes," she said, carelessly.

Agnes knew not what to say or do; it was evident that her perplexity was painful in the extreme.

Marian hastened to relieve her.

"You won't be jealous of your lover's sister, darling?"

"What! his sister! You don't mean—" gasped Agnes, and paused, trembling from many emotions.

"Yes, I do! Mr. Beach is Frederick Gale."

"Oh, you cruel, cruel girl!" exclaimed Agnes, bursting into tears from sheer mortification.

Patiently they waited for her excitement to subside, then Frederick placed his arm about her waist and said, soothingly:

"I am sure you love me none the less, dearest, sure that you are not even displeased with me for taking this method to gain your heart."

"I shan't contradict you," she answered, nestling her head on his shoulder. "But I'll scold Marian if—she isn't married within a year."

Marian escaped, for her wedding to an enterprising farmer occurred at the same hour that Agnes was made Mrs. Gale. W. G.

## LORD DANE'S ERROR.

### CHAPTER XLIII.

"YEARS ago," said Baron Chandos, "when he was alive who was Lord Dane before you, do you remember to have heard of anything peculiar in the relations existing between him and his countess?"

"It was said that they did not live happily together."

"That was true. Lady Dane was a Frenchwoman. She had been compelled to marry the earl against her wishes, and she never loved him. All her heart was given to another before she ever saw him. But she was a true and devoted wife to him. She could not love him as she had that other, but she was faithful to him, and made him happy till enemies came between them. The earl had a cousin who was heir to the Dane title and estates after him and his heirs. This cousin had imagined that the earl would never marry because he had lived so long without. His disappointment and chagrin when he heard of the marriage were great. He got a hint somewhere that Lady Dane had loved some one else, and told the earl, who had supposed all this time that his wife loved him as passionately as he did her. The earl taxed the countess with it, and she could make no denial, for it was true.

The earl's wrath was fearful. It was in vain that the countess reminded him how happy they had been, how true a wife she had been to him. In the

midst of the excitement attending the discovery and explanation the poor lady was taken ill. An heir was born. The earl sent the child out to nurse, and vowed its mother should never see him. Three weeks later the child disappeared. It was suspected by some that the earl's cousin knew where the child was, but that was a mistake. The countess recovered—a lovelier woman than ever but sadder also. She was very gentle and attentive to her husband, and in time all seemed to grow smooth again. They had no more children for years, and then one was born. But it was a girl this time, and the disappointment—for Lord Dane believed his son to be dead and wanted another heir—the disappointment seemed to sour him.

"It chanced that when this last babe was only a few months old the countess's old lover came over from France, and the two who had been separated acerbely met after so many years. He had never married. They met unexpectedly to both at a garden fête. They were alone and they yielded to the overpowering agitation of the moment. The countess was weeping, her former lover held one of her trembling hands between his.

"Lord Dane surprised them thus. His anger was fearful. He would have run the French gentleman through had not the countess fallen upon him and kept him from using his sword while she entreated the other to go away. The next thought of the unhappy woman was for her babe. She believed that her enraged husband would now take that child from her as he had her boy before. She left the garden in an almost frenzied state, but outwardly calm and self-possessed. She ordered her carriage, and, without waiting for the earl, drove home to this very Dane House. Arrived there, she took the babe from its nurse's arms, tossed a shawl about it, and, without waiting to change her own rich dress, went back to the carriage and gave the man on the box orders to drive for his life to an address which she gave him.

"The man obeyed. The countess was absent till four in the morning. She came back without the child, and refused to tell where she had taken it. The earl ascertained, however, where it had been left that night from the coachman; but when he went there he found the house deserted, and could never get any clue to who had lived there or where they had gone.

"This sad affair ended in the final separation of Lord Dane from his wife. The countess went back to France, or started for there, and died on the way of grief and shame and a broken heart. So far, my lord, I presume I have not told you much news," the baron paused in his recital to say.

"It is not all news to me. A portion is," the earl answered, in a low voice.

"Now comes the important part of my story. Lady Dane had one brother, younger than herself, who idolized her. He was visiting her at Leuseleigh at the time of the first difficulty. He saw her first child, the young heir, torn from her by its father, he heard her shrieks of anguish when her enraged husband told her she should never see the boy again. He it was, young Paul Chandos, who stole the babe away and hid it where the mother could sometimes, at very rare intervals, come in secret and caress it. He it was who later received the last child from its mother's frantic arms and bore it away to a secure retreat."

Lord Dane had grown very pale. He understood the story.

Putting this recital to some other facts which had lately come to his knowledge, he could understand it.

"Are you Paul Chandos?" he asked, hoarsely.

"I am."

"Then you know—"

"What became of the heir and his sister? I do, up to a certain date."

"The heir was called Volney Heath, the sister's name is Perdita Lorne. Am I correct, baron?"

"You are."

"Will you explain to me why Volney Heath never claimed his rights, if he was in truth the rightful heir?"

"He did not know that he was. When he was seven years old I had reason to suspect that the earl had got a clue to our whereabouts. My sister was just dead, my heart was very sore. I had in my possession the necessary proofs of the birth and rights of the two children. I had promised my sister that they should never be given into their father's power until they were old enough to understand and be told why they had been severed from him. She could never get rid of a fear that he would not do right by them.

"I took both children to the door of a poor widow, of whose integrity and warm heart I knew, and left them there, intending in time to return for them. But a woman servant in my employ in a fit of anger stole the papers proving the birth of the two children. I followed her from town to town, to France, and finally to India.

"On my way to the last place I was shipwrecked

and lived on an island in the Southern Ocean for six years. I was finally rescued and brought to England once more by a passing ship. Since that time I have been seeking that woman who stole from me the proofs of the birth of my sister's children.

"Their father, Lord Dane, had died before I first left England—about the time I discovered the theft of the papers. I could do nothing without those papers, and I could not find the woman who had stolen them. I heard of her at last—she had been dead for years. But before her death she had sent for Rupert Vassar, who had been a foster child of hers, and confided the papers and the secret to him, so far as she knew it.

"She did not know that Volney Heath was the heir—I had scrupulously concealed his relationship to the little girl, and the woman believed the heir to be really dead. Hence Vassar supposed Perdita to be the heiress of all."

"She is the heiress of all!" questioned Lord Dane, in a voice of despair.

"After her brother and his heirs, yes. But you understand, my lord, I have no proof either of her brother's death or her own birth."

Lord Dane bowed his head upon his hand, trying to rise against the blow.

"You will find the proof," he said.

"I hope so; I have the clue."

"Ah?"

The earl looked at him earnestly.

"Yes, the woman who stole it was named Cheeny. She was the mother of your lordship's confidential man, than whom—beggings your pardon—there is not a greater scoundrel unauing. His own mother distrusted him, and confided the papers she had stolen to Rupert Vassar instead of him in consequence. Cheeny knew that there was a secret, and that it concerned Perdita Lorne. What that secret was he did not know, till Vassar himself told him in his rage just after his daughter's marriage to poor Volney. Can you guess now, my lord, what is the villainy your valet is endeavouring to perpetrate at Rylands?"

"I could perhaps if he were a single man," the earl answered, with a painfully roused look.

"Is he not a single man?"

Lord Dane shook his head.

"No."

"How do you know that he is not?"

"I have seen his wife. He has a wife and one child."

"Perhaps his wife is dead. Stay," the baron added, lifting his hand, while his face whitened suddenly. "I think I know how Rupert Vassar came to his death. I have been tracing the matter slowly home."

Lord Dane looked at him excitedly.

"Have you had no suspicion?" asked the baron.

"None of any value."

"Whom have your suspicions pointed at? Any one near home?"

Lord Dane made a startled gesture.

"Certainly not."

"Not at—Wait. Were any papers found on Vassar?"

"None. Cheeny told me he said he had deposited them in London for safe keeping."

"And you did not see through that? You did not suspect Cheeny himself of having them all the time?"

"I suspected him, I accused him, but he denied it so stoutly, and with such seeming sincerity, that I believed him."

"Nevertheless he had them, and he has them still."

(To be continued.)

## FACETIÆ.

**NATURALLY.**—Why does a German naturally make the best performer on a wind instrument? Because he was born a Teuton (a-tootin').

**AN EXTENSIVE ORDER.**—"Oh, please, miss, will you give us two 'a'pennies for a penny, and gi' me a drink o' water, an' tell us the right time? An' father wants a pipe; and lend mother yesterday's 'Tizer'!"—*Punch.*

## MIND AND MATTER.

**Augustus (poetical):** "Look, Edith! How lovely are those fleecy cloudlets dappled over the—"

**Edith (prosaic):** "Yes. 'Exactly like gravy when it's getting cold. Isn't it?"—*Punch.*

**KILLED TWICE.**—An Irish paper publishes the following: "A deaf man named Taff was run down by a passenger train and killed on Wednesday morning. He was injured in a similar way about a year ago."

**THE CITY MORALS.**—Among the recent Civic ceremonies the attention of the public has not been sufficiently attracted towards the "Swearing in the Sheriffs." Now swearing in anybody is bad, and, by degrees, worse according to the rank of the of-

fender. Our sheriffs should set good examples. If swearing in the sheriffs is permitted, nay, sanctioned, how can we stop cursing in coal-heavers? We trust that our present Lord Mayor will not countenance such immoral proceedings, and will check all swearing in sheriffs at the rate of five shillings an oath at the very least.—*Punch.*

## A WARNING TO ENAMOURED CURATES.

**Young Lady:** "And so Adam was very happy. Now, can you tell me what great sorrow fell on him?"

**Scholar:** "Please, miss, he got a wife!"—*Punch.*

## A NECESSARY PROVISIO.

**Brown:** "Mr. Smith, I wish to speak to you a moment privately. Permit me to take you apart."

**Smith (who wasn't the least bit frightened):** "Certainly, sir, if you'll promise to put me together again."

**PROVERBIAL PHILOSOPHY.**—The papers are all eagerly assuring us that a few days since Lambeth Police Court had "a clean sheet." If this small sacrifice to tidiness is so rare an occurrence as to require special mention, we think the court might be allowed to "wash its dirty linen at home."—*Fun.*

**NO TROUBLE AT ALL.**—An Irishman dining at an hotel, after peeling his potatoes, would throw the skins over his shoulder. The landlord observed this strange conduct, and told him to put the skins on the table. "It's no trouble at all, sir," answered the Milesian; "I'd just as soon toss them over my shoulder."

**ANOTHER EXTINGUISHER WANTED.**—This is too much. Here's Vesuvius wanting to break out again. The seismographs supply most unpleasant information. We do not want to be rude, but if the peace of the Continent be again menaced by an inflammatory action appeal will lie to M. Von Bismarck.—*Punch.*

## MORE OR LESS TRUE.

**First Irishman:** "Biddy, ooh, she's a quare one too an' all, she's got one eye bigger than the other since she fought Mrs. Malone."

**Second Ditto:** "Arrah now, and that's where you're wrong intirely; she's got one smaller than the other!"—*Fun.*

## ON THE MAP.

**George:** "Oh, I love the Park so! I prefer it to Switzerland, really!"

**Mabel:** "Why, George, you've never been to Switzerland!"

**George:** "No, but I've seen it on the map, and I don't like the look of it at all."

**A VALUABLE QUALITY.**—A gentleman purchased a very fine horse. Returning from a ride a few days afterwards, he met his solicitor, but at that moment the horse became restive and threw him. For that the horse was sold, and first much lauded, with the intimation that after the sale the buyer would be told his most valuable quality, which added a few pounds to his value. The information was "He shied at a lawyer!"

**A CROWD OF WITNESSES.**—In the course of a recent trial in San Francisco, growing out of a gambling transaction, the judge asked "If there was any one in the court who could show how a 'cold deck' was 'rung in' in a game of poker." Extraordinary to relate, most of the spectators rushed for the witness box. Such a crowd of witnesses was embarrassing, and the court concluded not to take testimony upon the points.

## A SHORT-SIGHTED ARGUMENT.

**Liza's Mother:** "I've come to know, mum, what my poor Liza's done, nam, as you should give her notice?"

**Liza's Mistress:** "I have explained to Eliza that it is for no fault of hers, but she is so extremely short-sighted as to be really of no use at all!"

**Liza's Mother:** "Well, mum, if she is she must ha' caught it here. She hadn't got it when she left 'ome!"—*Fun.*

## A FACT! REALLY!!

**Rev. Mr. Snuffloworth (who hath called to solicit contributions towards the extinction of the chapel debt, seeketh to ingratiate himself):** "How wonderfully all your little treasures resemble their father, Mrs. Gollor! This darling now especially reminds me of Mr. G.!"

**Mrs. G.:** "That's not my child at all, Mr. Snuffloworth; she belongs to a neighbour of ours, and is only here spending the day."

[*Rev. Snuffloworth maketh his exodus.*—*Fun.*]

**THE MOUSER.**—The Times correspondent informs us that the Prussians have invented a most destructive gun called "the Mouser," which is far superior to the Henry-Martini and all other deadly weapons. He adds that there is much mystery about it. Perhaps it is intended for private use. If so, will the Prussians be kind enough to try "the Mouser" on our garotters, if they catch them in Germany, and



thereby save us the trouble of applying the Cat?—*Punch*.

#### WHY HE SHOT AT IT.

Two sportsmen, named Hoffman and Cowan, both good shots, and not a little given to boasting of their skill, went to Scotland for the shooting season. One day they went out on a deering expedition.

Shortly after they separated, and Hoffman heard Cowan's gun fired off. He went to the spot, expecting to help Cowan hang up a deer. He found him loading his gun, and shouted out:

"Hullo, Cowan! What did you shoot at just now?"

"None o' your business; go along over the hill."

Surprised at this answer, Hoffman looked around, and discovered a calf among the bushes. Again he cried:

"I say, Cowan, did you shoot at the calf?"

"Yes, I did; but it's none o' your business."

"Why, what made you shoot at it?"

"Why, I took it for a deer."

"Well, did you hit it?"

"No; I missed it."

"How did you miss it?"

"Why, I wasn't quite sure that it wasn't a calf."

"You're a pretty specimen of a sportsman," rejoined Hoffman, "to shoot at a calf for a deer, and miss it at that!"

"Don't make an idiot of yourself," replied Cowan; "I shot at it just so as to hit it if it was a deer, and miss it if it was a calf."

As a gentleman was telling his friend that a mutual acquaintance was sent to prison for gross intoxication, he was asked why he did not bail him. "Bail him out!" he replied, "why you could not pump him out."

#### HOW JOE LOST HIS BET.

An old fellow named Joe Poole, very eccentric, and an incorrigible stammerer, was a constant loungee at a tavern in Waterford.

One day a traveller from a distant part arrived at the tavern and was met by an old acquaintance, a resident of the town.

After some conversation on different topics the traveller was addressed as follows:

"By the way, Brown, look out for Joe Poole tonight. You will know him quick enough by his stammering. He will be sure to come, and will offer to bet that you've not got a whole shirt to your back. If you take him up you will surely lose by a trick he's got. He invariably offers to lay this wager and always wins."

"Very well," said the traveller; "I will not let him get ahead of me. Much obliged for the caution."

The evening arrived, and a large crowd was collected in the parlour.

Our friend was there, and old Joe Poole was present and in his element.

"I t-t-tell you wh-what! You are n-ni-nicely dressed, but I'll b-b-bet you t-t-ten shillings you haven't g-g-got a whole sh-sh-shirt to your ba-ba-back."

"I'll take the bet," said the stranger. "Put the money in the landlord's hands."

This being done the traveller pulled off his coat and was about following suit with his vest, when Joe cried out:

"Ho-ho-hold on! You've l-l-lost! Ha-ha-half your shirt is fr-fr-front, and the other ha-ha-half is on your ba-ba-back!"

There was a roar of laughter, but the new comer did not mind it but pulled off his vest too, and quietly turning his back to Joe displayed to his astonished gaze a shirt neatly folded and placed underneath his vest.

Of course the laugh was turned upon Poole, who acknowledged that he had lost the wager. He never offered to bet again.

#### THE NEXT GENERATION.

The next generation will possess an army properly clothed.

The next generation will all be able to read and write.

The next generation will wear light clothes in summer.

The next generation will remove some of the public statues and edifices which their predecessors have erected.

The next generation will find life supportable without so many vestries.

The next generation will not make calls.

The next generation will ride to and fro in decent cabs.

The next generation will have other sorts of fish in daily consumption besides red herrings.

The next generation will speak French and Ger-

man, and possibly know something of their own language and literature.

The next generation will not wear high black hats in the month of July.

The next generation will see the officers of the army walking about the streets in uniform.

The next generation will have other public places of amusement open to them on Sundays besides public-houses.

The next generation will be better cooks.

The next generation will have no theatres with fees.

The next generation will leave the table with the ladies.

The next generation will not avoid hotels.

The next generation will find they can get on pretty comfortably without the Lord Privy Seal, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Judge Advocate General, etc.

The next generation will not be ashamed of Leicester Square.

The next generation will be able to cross the Channel with less bodily discomfort.

The next generation will journey by railway more safely and more punctually.

The next generation will still have the National Debt, duns, dentists, domestics, humbugs, quacks, impostors, absurd fashions, adulteration, swindlers, and the income-tax.—*Punch*.

#### DO THE RIGHT.

Do the right, oh, child of pleasure!

Let thy heart be free from stain,

Spurn from thee each selfish treasure,

Love the good and thou shalt gain.

In the gilded haunt of beauty

Of the demon doth invite;

Bear in mind thy noblest duty—

Shun the wrong and do the right.

Do the right, oh, child of sorrow;

Never let thy hopes grow faint;

For the sunshine comes to-morrow—

Strive to be a worthy saint.

E'en though life to thee seems dreary,

And thy prospects dark as night,

Never let thy faith grow weary—

Banish wrong and trust the right.

Do the right and never falter;

Never be ashamed to own

That the right thou wilt not palter,

Nor its happiness disown.

Be a good and faithful servant;

Though your station in the fight

May be humble, yet, if fervent,

Thou wilt conquer with the right.

G. W. P.

#### HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

P. W. NICOLL kindly sends the following, which may prove both instructive and useful to our readers:

1.—TO ECONOMIZE FUEL.—Take one bushel of small coal or sawdust or both mixed together, two bushels of sand, one bushel and a half of clay; let these be mixed together with common water like ordinary mortar—the more they are mixed the better—then make them into balls or bricks, pile them in a dry place, and when they are hard and sufficiently dry they may be used. A fire cannot be lighted with them alone, but when once well lit put them on behind with a coal or two in front and they will keep up a stronger fire than any fuel of the common kind. In Belgium small coal, or slack, is mixed with equal quantities of clay, which, after being dried and pulverized, is made into mortar and then made into balls or bricks, and burnt by the working classes. After being properly dried clay is burnt by farmers, and once ignited may be fed and kept burning for many days. It would be well to have a supply of slack in every house, and when not too cold bank up the fire as is done in steam vessels. By putting a brick at the back of the grate and one on each side a great economy of coal will be made. The bricks will become red hot, and will throw out as much heat as coal.

2.—A SIMPLE CURE FOR GRAVEL.—Take a quantity of blackberries and boil them with sugar like any other jam or preserve. Eat a teaspoonful three or four times a day and the cure will speedily follow. They make a very palatable tart or pudding, and as they are now in season people should make a good stock of them. They are a good substitute for butter during the winter, and their value in fevers is also a great recommendation.

3.—THE NETTLE.—The nettle, despised by man, made into strong tea in a green or dried state, and half a pint drunk night and morning, will, with temperate living, cure dropsy, scurvy, sores of all kinds, spitting of blood and bleeding of the nose, asthma, gravel, liver complaint, general debility, gout, rheu-

matism, paralysis, worms, scrofula, nephritis, yellow fever, and neuralgia. A cataplasm or poultice of the leaves applied hot is a great solvent in tumours, and removes neuralgic pains.

#### STATISTICS.

CITY PARISHES.—The census returns of 1871 show that time and chance have made such changes in the City of London that the population of some of the parishes has become so small as to be unable to be very much less. The enumerators found only 53 persons resident in the parish of St. Margaret Moses; 51 in Allhallows, Honey Lane; 51 in St. John the Evangelist; 49 in St. Olave, Silver Street; 46 in St. Mildred, Bread Street; 45 in St. Christopher-le-Stock; 42 in St. Leonard, Foster Lane; 33 in St. Mary, Staining; and 32 in St. Benet, Sherehog. A return prepared by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners shows the advantage gained by the union of small City parish churches, not needing an ecclesiastical establishment for each. The site and materials of St. Benet's Church, Gracechurch Street (a parish with a population of 113), sold for 24,650*l.*—696 square feet were taken by the Commissioners of Sewers, and the remaining area of 2,218 square feet produced 21,000*l.* Out of this fund the sum of 1,500*l.* was applied to erecting a parsonage house for Allhallows, Lombard Street, and 4,000*l.* for repairing and re-pewing the church of that parish; 6,000*l.* in erecting a new church of St. Benet, at Stepney, and 2,000*l.* in endowing it.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

MR. FORSTER has just purchased a freehold mansion from the Duke of Bedford, in Belgrave Square, for 70,000*l.*

CAPE COALS.—From the Cape we learn that coals have been found in large quantities in the district of Queenstown.

THE TENNANT ESTATE.—The Tennant Estate, in Glamorganshire, of 1,512 acres, and having a rental of 5,705*l.* per annum, has been sold in London for 157,000*l.*

A ROMAN RELIC.—A letter from Jerusalem says:—"Labourers working under the direction of a distinguished French lady, the Princess de la Tour d'Auvergne, have just discovered on the Mount of Olives, near the Church of the Pater, a splendid specimen of ancient mosaic in four colours—white, red, black, and yellow. It is 16 feet long, but as yet only six feet of its width have been uncovered. This relic, it is believed, belonged to some sumptuous Roman habitation."

COUNTY OF LONDON.—Besides the fifty-two counties, many important towns have the privileges of counties, and are, in fact, called counties corporate, or counties in themselves. These try their own criminals, and transact all their affairs by their own officers, without any interference of the sheriff or other official of the county in which they are situated. The following cities and towns of England are counties in themselves:—London, Bristol, Canterbury, Chester, Exeter, Gloucester, Kingston-on-Hull, Lichfield, Lincoln, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Norwich, Nottingham, Poole, Southampton, Worcester, York; and, in Wales, Carmarthen, Haverfordwest.

THE FLAVOUR OF BUTTER.—A German journal says that a great portion of the fine flavour of fresh butter is destroyed by the usual mode of washing, and recommends a thorough kneading for the removal of the buttermilk, and a subsequent pressing in a linen cloth. Butter thus prepared is pre-eminent for its sweetness of taste and flavour, qualities which are retained for a long time. To improve manufactured butter we are advised by the same authority to work it thoroughly with fresh cold milk, and then to wash it in clear water; and it is said that even old and rancid butter may be rendered palatable by washing it in water, to which a few drops of a solution of chloride of lime have been added.

LARGE PURCHASES OF RIFLES BY THE PRUSSIAN GOVERNMENT.—The Prussian Government have, it is stated, ordered from the Westley-Richards Small Arms and Ammunition Company in Birmingham 150,000 rifles on the improved pattern, together with a million cartridges. This new weapon is said to be capable of being fired, with effect, when in action, twenty-five times in a minute. If every bullet has its billet, one man armed with this rifle will be able to kill 1,500 men an hour, and if all the 150,000 rifles be discharged continuously for one minute, and each bullet take effect, 3,750,000 corpses will strew the ground in front of them. This ought to make the next war short, sharp and decisive, and leave nothing to be desired in the way of "deadly liveliness." Perhaps our most active ingenuity will some day take the form of saving life as well as destroying it.

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MARIGOLD and LUCY.—Specimen of hair enclosed a pretty brown.

KIT W.—Most assuredly you would be prosecuted for bigamy. Be careful how you proceed.

R. K.—Must improve greatly in the art of verse-making ere he can hope to appear in print.

TOPSY.—We know of no such root, but then "Topsy's" writing is so careless and indistinct that we cannot decipher her letter. Inquire of a chemist and druggist.

W. R. FULTON.—Females cannot vote at either Town Councils or General Elections, although they are eligible for seats at the School Boards.

CELEBR.—1. The monthly parts of the "LONDON READER" of course consist of numbers of the journal bound up in a distinctive cover. 2. One week.

ZERO.—Write to or call at the office of the registrar for births, deaths and marriages of your own district, who will give you all the information you require.

LENA FARINA.—1. Young ladies are employed in the Telegraph Offices, their salaries vary according to their ability. 2. We should say about fifteen shillings a week.

WANDERING WILLIE.—Notwithstanding your very coarse vulgarity, we reply, that if you have sufficient patience you will see your communication in due course.

A GLASGOWGIAN.—How unreasonable to expect we can answer such a question without knowing the terms of your grandfather's will; in all probability your mother has the power of making a will of her own.

ONE IN DISTRESS.—Under the circumstances stated by you, we do not think that any County Court judge could compel you to pay your deceased husband's debts.

RICHARD JENNINGS.—We regret we cannot insert your verses; if ideas are good, but the execution very indifferent, still we think you might make another effort with at least a chance of success.

S. O.—Apply by letter, containing references as to character and fitness for the position, to any shipowner. You will find advertisements in all the daily papers, especially of ships about sailing for the colony you mention.

IRENE DE CASTRO.—1. You cannot cultivate your voice without practice, at the same time you should practise under the advice of a professional vocalist, for many a fine voice has been ruined by straining at too early an age. 2. Your handwriting is very good.

PHOTOGRAPHY.—There are so many methods adopted for preparing photographic collection that a large volume might be filled with notices of them. There is however an excellent little and cheap work by Jabez Hughes, "Principles and Practice of Photography," which will give you the information you require.

NELLIE.—Bathe the part affected frequently with cold water, being careful to rub dry afterwards. You should also try a "tonic" viz., muriated tincture of iron, with or without quinine. The chemist from whom you purchase it will tell the number of drops to a dose, and how often to be repeated. It is a very cheap remedy. Fresh air and exercise you will find useful auxiliaries.

G. P. Y.—To imitate mahogany by staining. Warm the wood by the fire, then wash it over with aquafortis, let it stand twenty-four hours to dry, and polish it with linseed oil reddened by digesting alkaneet root in it; or, instead of the latter, give the wood a coat of varnish or French polish which has been tinged of a mahogany colour by a little aloes and annatto.

MARIE SMITH.—The amount of salt and water required to extract the juice from walnuts depends upon the quantity of them used. The following recipe however may prove useful. To one quart of walnuts add a pound of salt and one pint of water, but we would advise our correspondent not to use the decoction for the purpose named. Let Nature alone.

W. E. D.—We cannot tell without knowing the terms of agreement between you and your employer. The established rule or custom however of your trade should settle the question. Under ordinary circumstances a servant or employee cannot quit his employer without giving due notice, but in the cases, to wit, of omnibus drivers they are employed, we believe, only by the separate journey.

WILLIAM OF LISBURN.—The state of your tongue of a morning, as you admit, arises from the state of your stomach and probably bad habits the previous night. Take a mild aperient, and cultivate temperance in eating, drinking and smoking, and you will speedily be in

full health. At your age 5ft. 10in. is a good height, it is not likely you will become taller; few young people indeed grow after eighteen years of age.

M. C.—1. Excepting local directories and special county histories, we know of no other works than those named by you. You could only obtain the full information you require in the reading-room of the British Museum. 2. We believe the rev. gentleman has published a work on Entomology. Write to Messrs. Routledge and Son, Broadway, Ludgate Hill, which firm has published several of his works.

AN INQUIRER.—1. With care and practice your handwriting would pass. Your carelessness in composition, however—to wit, ignoring the proper use of the definite article—would bar your chance of success in passing the necessary examination. 2. Coming examinations for most branches of the Civil Service are duly advertised, with the number of vacancies to be filled up, in the daily papers. You should watch the latter.

CONSTANT SUBSCRIBER.—Fruit stains, iron moulds, and other spots in linen may, in general, be removed by applying to the part, previously washed clean, a weak solution of chlorine, chloride of lime, spirits of salts, oxalic acid, or salts of lemon, in warm water, and frequently by merely using a little lemon juice. When the stain is removed the part should be thoroughly rinsed in clean warm water (without soap) and dried.

A BOOK BINDER.—The chemicals used for marbling the edges and covers of books are, for blue—Prussian blue, or indigo; red, rose-pink, vermilion, or drop lake; yellow, king's yellow, yellow ochre; for white, flake white; black, or burnt lampblack; brown, amber, or terra di sienna, burnt sienna; black mixed with yellow or red also makes brown; green, blue and yellow mixed; purple, red and blue mixed. For each colour provide two cups, one for the ground colour, the other to mix them with the ox gall, which must be used to thin them at discretion.

## PLEASURE.

What is pleasure? Is't a dream,  
The offspring of the brain,  
An idle fancy? does it seem  
Another form for pain?  
A treacherous thief, a hypocrite,  
A smiling temptress who  
Deceives the heart, and steals the wit,  
A coquette none should woo?

What is pleasure? Is it not  
A welcome aim of life,  
The source of our common lot,  
The antidote to strife?  
Yes, if religion is the mode,  
And virtue in the guide,  
True happiness the goal, the road  
The narrow, not the wide.

W. P.

HOMESTEAD.—To prepare the skins as furs, the inside of them is generally first tawed by the application of a solution of alum. They are next well dusted over and rubbed with hot plaster of Paris or whiting, and are lastly thoroughly dried and brushed clean. When it is desired to change or modify their colour, the grease being removed by lime water or a weak soda lye, they are stretched out on a table or board and the ordinary liquid mordants and dyes are applied to them hot by means of a painter's brush.

WALNUT JUICE.—1. You cannot prevent redness of the skin. Why so desired? Is a sign of health and more natural to some persons than to others. 2. To darken the hair. Boil for a few minutes chloride of sodium 1dr. and sulphate of iron 2drs., in red wine, 1lb.; then add of verdigris 1dr.; in two or three minutes remove it from the fire, and further add of powdered galls 2drs.; the next day filter. For use, moisten the hair with the liquid, in a few minutes dry it with a cloth, and afterwards wash the skin with water.

J. S. GREY, eighteen, dark complexion, wishes to marry a young lady about seventeen.

T. H. J., twenty, medium height, fair complexion, blue eyes, and well able to keep a wife, she must be about seventeen or eighteen, and fond of home and children.

D. ALBERT, twenty-three, 5ft. 5in., dark hair and eyes, and a mechanic. Respondent must be about twenty, domesticated, and fond of home.

J. H., twenty, 5ft. 7in., rather good looking, would like to marry a young lady about seventeen, and with a little money.

MAUD VALENTINE is domesticated, and would make a kind, affectionate wife to a kind, manly fellow. Respondent must be over thirty.

A COUNTRY GIRL, nineteen, 5ft. 4in., dark hair, blue eyes, well educated, fond of home and music. Respondent must be tall, good prospects, and fond of home.

NELLIE, twenty, not very tall, fair, loving, domesticated, fond of home; would like to correspond with one who would make a good husband.

ANNIE, twenty, tall, dark-brown hair and eyes, and very domesticated. Respondent must be about twenty-five, tall, and good looking; a mechanic preferred.

CONSTANT READER, thirty, tall, rather dark, in the Army and in a good position. Respondent must be about twenty-five, tall, and willing to make a home comfortable; a dressmaker preferred.

LOTTIE B., nineteen, average height, brown hair, blue eyes, fair complexion, loving and musical. Respondent must be tall, dark, handsome, well educated, and not under twenty-four.

M. E. M., twenty-one, tall, slight, good tempered, of a loving disposition, and considered good looking. Respondent must be about twenty-four, a tradesman and tall.

EDWARD F. P., nineteen, 5ft. 3in., a seaman, dark eyes and hair, fair complexion, would like to marry a young woman about the same age, who would make a loving wife.

HAPPY NELL, eighteen, medium height, fair, pretty, domesticated, fond of home and children, and would make a loving wife. Respondent must be about twenty-

two, dark, handsome, in a good situation, and affectionate.

MARY, twenty-three, average height, very fair, curly hair, loving, and would make a good wife. Respondent must be loving, and not over twenty-six; a tradesman preferred.

EMILY B., twenty-one, golden hair, blue eyes, loving, and domesticated. Respondent must be a good-looking young man, fond of home, who would make a loving husband.

B., twenty-three, good height, genteel figure, auburn hair, good complexion, very domesticated, would like to correspond with a young man who is tall, fond of home, and with a salary of 300l. a year.

LOVING TAD, twenty-five, good looking, in a good position, and fond of music; would make a loving husband. Respondent must be about twenty-two, good looking, and fond of home.

SARAH, eighteen, rather tall, considered pretty, and domesticated. Would like to marry a tall young man, not more than twenty-three, and of a kind, loving disposition; a mechanic preferred.

LIZZIE S., twenty, tall, fair, brown hair, gray eyes, very loving, and domesticated, wishes to marry a young man about twenty-five, who is loving and fond of home; a tradesman preferred.

AMICE, twenty-one, 5ft. 5in., blue eyes, fair complexion, very loving, and fond of music. Respondent must be about twenty-five, fond of home and children; a clerk preferred.

LIZZIE, nineteen, rather tall, pretty and dark, would like to marry a gentleman who is a native of Liverpool, rather tall, from twenty-three to twenty-eight, very loving and good tempered, and in very favourable circumstances.

JANE, thirty, tall, with dark curling hair, good looking, very industrious, would make a good wife. Respondent must be tall, handsome, steady, industrious, in a comfortable position, and must be over thirty-three years of age.

DAVID, thirty-two, tall, dark hair, handsome, loving, and has a comfortable home. Respondent must be one that will make a good wife, kind, loving, and pretty; a domestic servant, tall, from twenty-eight to thirty preferred.

JOLLY FRED, twenty-three, tall, dark hair and eyes and has a little money. Respondent must be tall, handsome, able to make a working man's home comfortable, in possession of a little money, and about twenty; one accomplished preferred.

MRS. B., nineteen, tall, fair complexion, gray eyes, auburn hair, domesticated, fond of home, and will make a loving wife to a good husband. Respondent should be about twenty-one, moderately tall, dark, fond of home, able to keep a wife comfortably, and fond of home; a carpenter preferred.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

EDITH is responded to by—"Fin-Ma-Cool," twenty-seven, fair complexion, light-brown hair, and in independent circumstances.

C. T. by—"Marion S.," twenty, fair hair, dark blue eyes, able to cook, and would make a good housewife.

JOSEPH N. by—"Fanny," who is rather tall, dark hair and eyes, and all he requires.

FRED T. by—"B.," nineteen, tall, fair, and would like to go abroad.

SAMUEL by—"Edith," eighteen, rather tall, considered a good figure, and very fond of children.

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